ECEMBER 1920

Everybody's Magazine

Serials

A. S. M. HUTCHINSON
SAMUEL MERWIN
ELMER DAVIS

Short Stories

JOHN GALSWORTHY
RUTH SAWYER
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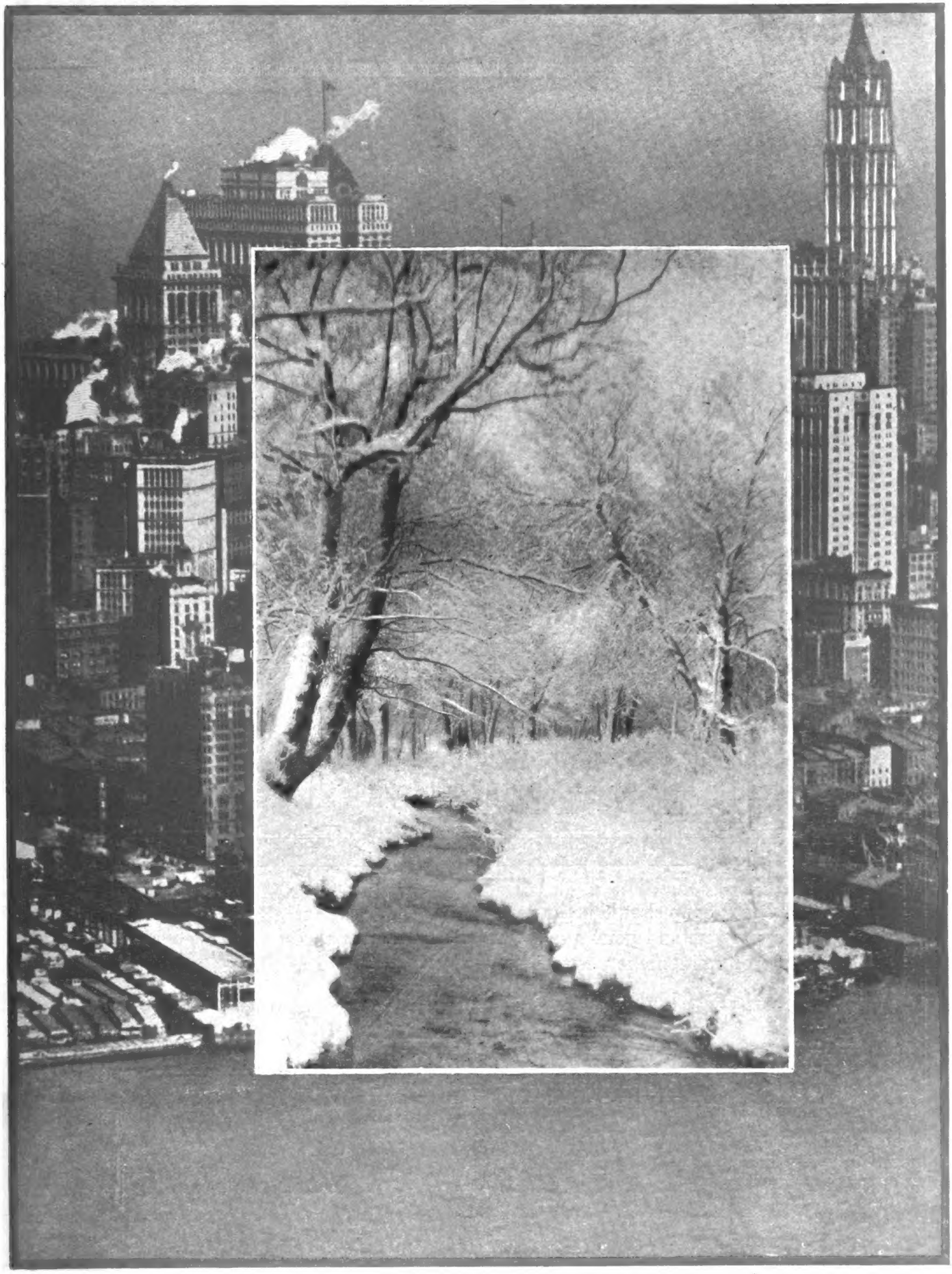

Through Winter's Windows

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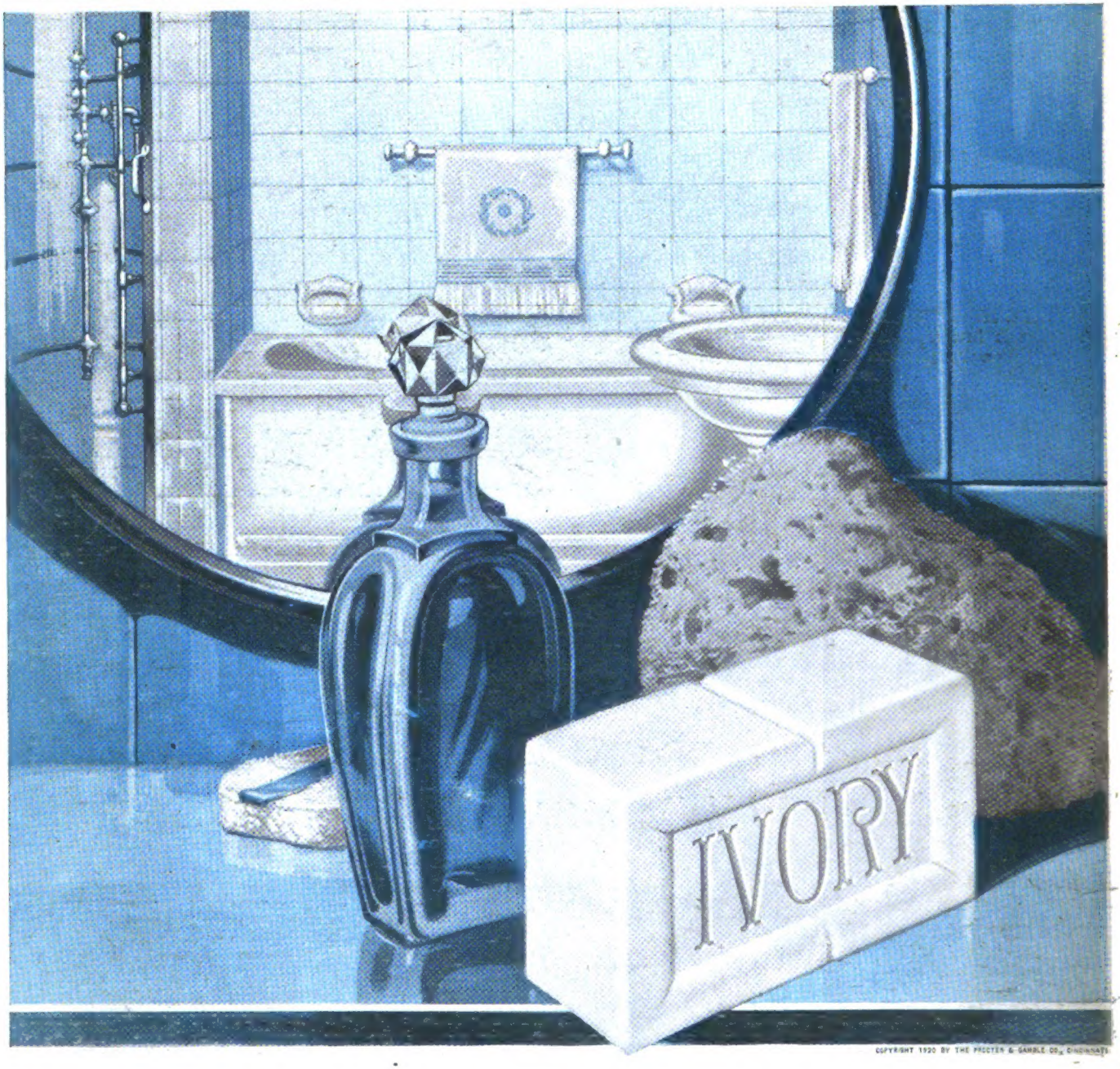

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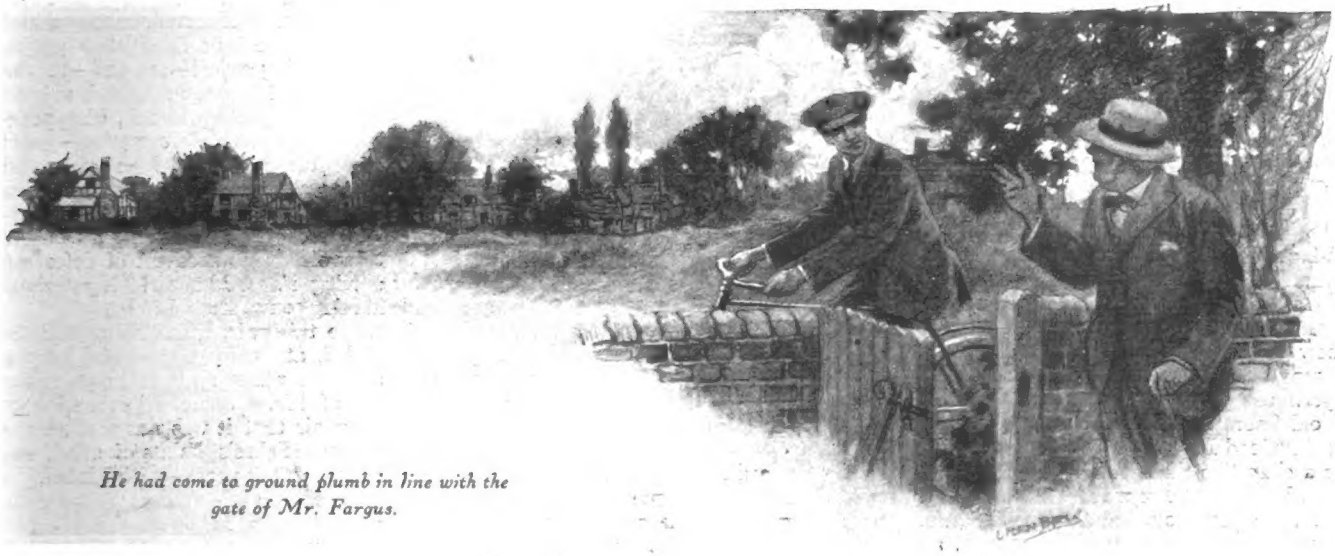

He had come to ground plumb in line with the gate of Mr. Fargus.

If Winter Comes

By A. S. M. Hutchinson

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THE two short stories by A. S. M. Hutchinson published in EVERYBODY'S during the past year proclaimed a fact of moment to all lovers of good fiction, and especially to those to whom "Once Aboard the Lugger," "The Happy Warrior," and "The Clean Heart" were sources of the joy and inspiration all great art gives, and a promise of greater to come. For six years the author of these enthusiastically acclaimed books has been silent, swallowed up, as private and officer, in the chaos, the arduous sacrifices and the despondency of the war. In 1914, he says he felt he could never write again.

But it was from the trenches of France in the last year of the struggle that he wrote us hopefully that his inspiration was stirring to new life. That inspiration, strengthened and elevated by the war, has given us the story that begins here. "If Winter Comes" is Mr. Hutchinson's most mature and most important novel—in his own words, "streets ahead of anything I have ever done"—and it is the most convincing reassurance to those who feared that the war had blighted art. Its characters, drawn with the vivid flexibility and intimate reality of life—the valiant figure of Mark Sabre, whose inarticulate soul, burning with a vision of the better world to come, grapples and conquers overwhelming odds of circumstance; his deepest love, Nona, who becomes the solacing symbol of his vision—these will remain with you many a day. Their story is among the most heart-stirring it has been our good fortune to publish in a long time.

". . . O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"
—Shelley.

PART I—Mabel

Chapter One

Old Puzzlehead

TO TAKE Mark Sabre at the age of thirty-four, and in the year 1912, and at the place Penny Green is to necessitate looking back a little toward the time of his marriage in 1904, but happens to find him in good light for observation. Encountering him hereabouts, one who had shared school-days with him at his preparatory school so much as twenty-four years back would have found matter for recognition.

A usefully garrulous person, one Hapgood, a solicitor, found much:

"Whom do you think I met yesterday? Old Sabre! You remember old Sabre at old Wickamote's? Yes, that's the chap. Used to call him Puzzlehead, remember? Because he used to screw up his forehead over things old Wickamote or any of the other masters said and sort of drawl out 'Well, I don't see that, sir.' Yes, rather! And then that other expression of his. Just the opposite. When old Wickamote or some one had landed him, or all of us, with some dashed punishment, and we were gassing about it, used to screw up his nut in the same way and say 'Yes, but I see what he *means*.' And some one would say 'Well, what does he mean, you ass?' and he'd start gassing some rot till some one said 'Good Lord, fancy sticking up for a master' and old Puzzlehead would say, 'You sickening fool, I'm not sticking up for him. I'm only saying he's right from how he looks at it and it's no good saying he's wrong.' Ha! Funny days. Jolly nice chap, though, old Puzzlehead was. Yes, I met him. Fact I run into him occasionally. We do a mild account business with his firm. I buzz down there about once a year. Tidborough. He's changed, of course. So have you, you know. That Vandyke beard, what? Ha! Old Sabre's not done anything outrageous like that. Real thing I seemed to notice about him when I bumped into him yesterday was that he didn't look very cheery. Looked to me rather as though he'd lost something and was wondering where it was. Ha! But dashed funny—I mentioned

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something about that appalling speech that chap made in that blasphemy case, yesterday. Eh? yes, absolutely frightful wasn't it?—well, I'm dashed if old Sabre didn't puzzle up his nut in exactly the same old way and say 'Yes, but I see what he *means*.' I reminded him and ragged him about it no end. Absolutely the same words and expression. Funny chap—nice chap.

"WHAT did he say the blasphemy man meant? Oh, I don't know; some bilge, just as he used to about the masters. You know the man talked some rubbish about how the state couldn't have it both ways—couldn't blaspheme against God by flatly denying that all men were equal and basing all its legislation on keeping one class up and the other class down; couldn't do that and at the same time prosecute him because he said that religion was—well, you know what he said; I'm dashed if I like to repeat it. Joke of it was that I found myself using exactly the same expression to old Sabre as we used to use at school. I said 'Good Lord, man, fancy sticking up for a chap like that!' And old Sabre—by Jove, I tell you there we all were in a flash back in the playground at old Wickamote's, down in that corner by the workshop, all kids again and old Puzzlehead flicking his hand out of his pocket—remember how he used to—like *that*—and saying: 'You sickening fool, I'm not sticking *up* for him, I'm only saying he's right from how he looks at it and it's no good saying he's wrong!' Rum, eh, after all those years. No, he didn't say 'You sickening fool' this time. I reminded him how he used to and he laughed and said 'Yes; did I? Well, I still get riled, you know, when chaps can't see—' And then he said 'Yes, sickening fool; so I did; odd!' and he looked out of the window as though he was looking a thousand miles away—this was at his house you know—and chucked talking absolutely.

"Yes, I went over to his place from Tidborough, where I'd been to see a client. He's got a dashed good business down there at Tidborough, you know. Dashed good. Fortune, East & Sabre. Never heard of them? Ah, well that shows you're not a pillar of the church, old son. If you took the faintest interest in your particular place of worship, or in any Anglican place of worship, you'd know that whenever you want anything for the church from a hymn book or a hassock or a pew to a pulpit or a screen or a spire you go to Fortune, East & Sabre, Tidborough. Similarly in the scholastic line, anything from a birchrod to a desk—Fortune, East & Sabre, by return and the best. No, they're *the* great church and school furnishing people. 'Ecclesiastical and Scholastic Furnishers and Designers' they call themselves. And they're IT. No really decent church or really gentlemanly school thinks of going anywhere else. They keep at Tidborough because they were there when they furnished the first church in the year one or thereabouts. I expect they did the sun-ray fittings at Stonehenge. Ha! Anyway, they're one of the stately firms of old England and do well on it. Rather. Oh, old Sabre has butter with his bread all right.

"Married? Oh, yes, he's married. Has been some time, I believe, though they've got no kids. I had lunch at his place one time I was down Tidborough way. Now there's a place you ought to go to paint one of your pictures—where he lives—Penny Green. Picturesque, quaint if ever a place was. It's about seven miles from Tidborough; seven miles by road and about seven centuries in manners and customs and appearance and all that. Proper old village green, you know, with a duck pond and cricket pitch and houses all round it. No two alike. Just like one of Kate Greenaway's pictures, I always think. It just sits and sleeps. You wouldn't think there was a town within a hundred miles of it, let alone a bustling great place like Tidborough. Go down. You really ought to. Yes, and by Jove you'll have to hurry up if you want to catch the Old-World look of the place. It's developing—being developed. Eh? Yes; God help it; I agree. After all these centuries sleeping there, it's suddenly been discovered. People are coming out from Tidborough and Alton and Chovensbury to get away from their work and live there. Making a sort of garden suburb business of it. They've got a new church already. Stupendous affair considering the size of the place—but that's looking forward to this development movement, the new vicar chap says. He's doing the developing like blazes. Regular tiger he is for shoving things, particularly himself. Chap called Bagshaw—Boom Bagshaw. Character if ever there was one. But they're all characters down there from what I've seen of it.

"Yes, you go down there and have a look, with your sketch book. Old Sabre'll love to see you. His wife? Oh, very nice, distinctly nice. Pretty woman, very. Somehow I didn't think quite the sort of woman for old Puzzlehead. Didn't appear to have the remotest interest in any of the things he was keen about; and he seemed a bit fed with her sort of talk. Her's was all gossip—all about the people there and what a rum crowd they were. Devilish funny, I thought, some of her stories. But old Sabre—well, I suppose he's heard 'em before. Still, there was something—something about the two of them. You know that sort of—sort of—what the devil is it? sort of stiffish feeling you sometimes feel in the air with two people who don't quite click. Well, that was it. Probably only my fancy. As to that, you can pretty well cut the welkin with a knife at my place sometimes when me and my missus get our tails up: and we're fearful pals. Dare-say I just took 'em on an off day. But that was my impression though—that she wasn't just the sort of woman for old Sabre. But after all, what the devil sort of woman would be? Fiddling chap for a husband, old Puzzlehead. Can imagine him riling any wife with wrinkling up his nut over some plain as a pikestaff thing and saying 'Well, I don't quite see that.' Ha! Rum chap. Nice chap. Have a drink?"

Chapter Two

Penny Green

I

THUS, by easy means of the garrulous Hapgood, appear persons, places, institutions: lives, homes, activities; the web and the tangle and the amenities of a minute fragment of human existence: Life. An odd business. Into life we come, mysteriously arrived, are set on our feet and on we go; functioning more or less ineffectively, passing through permutations and combinations; meeting the successive events, shocks, surprises, of hours, days, years; becoming engulfed, submerged, foundered by them; all of us on the same adventure yet retaining nevertheless each his own individuality, as swimmers carrying each his undetachable burden through dark, enormous and cavernous seas. Mysterious journey! Uncharted, unknown and finally—but there is no finality! Mysterious and stunning sequel—not end—to the mysterious and tremendous adventure! Finally, of this portion, death, disappearance, awful and complete cessation—gone! Astounding development! Mysterious and hapless arrival, tremendous and mysterious passage, mysterious and alarming departure. No escaping it; no volition to enter it or to avoid it; no prospect of defeating it or solving it. Odd affair! Mysterious and stunning conundrum, Life!

Come to this pair, Mark Sabre and his wife Mabel, at Penny Green, and have a look at them mixed up in this mysterious business of life. Some apprehension of the odd affair that it was was characteristic of Mark Sabre's habit of mind, increasingly with the years—with Mabel.

II

PENNY GREEN, "picturesque, quaint if ever a place was," in garrulous Mr. Hapgood's words—lies in a shallow depression, in shape like a narrow meat dish. It runs east and west, and slightly tilted from north to south. To the north the land slopes pleasantly upwards in pasture and orchards, and here was the site of the Penny Green Garden Home Development Scheme. Beyond the site, a considerable area, stands Northrepps, the seat of Lord Tybar. Lord Tybar sold the Development site to the developers, and, as he signed the deed of conveyance, remarked in his airy way, "Ah, nothing like exercise, gentlemen. That's made every one of my ancestors turn in his grave." The developers tittered respectfully as befits men who have landed a good thing.

Westward of Penny Green is Chovensbury; behind Tidborough the sun rises.

A Kate Greenaway picture, the garrulous Hapgood had said of Penny Green; and it was well said. At its eastern extremity the winding lane from the splendid main road divided into two paths and encircled the green which had, as Hapgood had said, a cricket pitch (in summer) and a duck pond (more prominently in winter) also, in all seasons, and the survivors of many ages, a clump of beech trees surrounded by a decayed bench; a well surrounded by a decayed paling, so decayed that it had long ago thrown itself flat on the ground into which it continued venerably to melt; and at the south-eastern extremity a village pound surrounded by a decayed gray wall and now used by the youth of the village for the purpose of impounding one another in parties or sides in a game well called "Pound-I."

Sabre's house looked onto the green from its upper margin. The house was of gray stone and it presented over the doorway the date 1067.

"Nearly two hundred and fifty years," Mabel had once said.

"And I bet," Sabre had replied, "it's never been better kept or run than you run it now, Mabel."

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Two maids in black dresses ***rose awkwardly and bobbed awkward little bows.***

The tribute was well deserved. Mabel, who was in many ways a model woman, was preeminently a model housewife. "Crawshaws" was spotlessly kept and perfectly administered. Four living-rooms, apart from the domestic offices, were on the ground floor. One was the morning-room, in which they principally lived; one the dining-room and one the drawing-room. They were entered by enormously heavy doors of oak, fitted with latches, the drawing-room up two steps, the dining-room down one step and the morning-room and the fourth room on the level. All were low-beamed and many-windowed with lattice windows, all were stepped into as stepping into a very quiet place and somehow into a room which one had not expected to be there, or not quite that shape if a room was there. Sabre never quite lost that feeling of pleasant surprise on entering them.

The only room in the house which Sabre did not like was the fourth sitting-room on the ground floor; and it was his own room, furnished and decorated by Mabel for his own particular use and comfort. But she called it his "den" and Sabre loathed and detested the word den as applied to a room a man specially inhabits. It implied to him a masculine untidiness, and he was intensely orderly and hated untidiness. It implied customs and manners of what he called "boarding-house ideas" the idea that a man must have an untidily frowsy apartment into which he can retire and envelop himself in tobacco smoke, and where he "can have his own things about him," and "have his pipes and his pictures about him," and where he can wear "an old shooting-jacket and slippers," and he loathed and detested all these phrases and the ideas they connoted. He had no "old shooting-jacket" and he would have given it to the gardener if he had had an old shooting-jacket, and he detested wearing slippers and never did wear slippers; it was his habit to put on his boots after his bath and to keep them on till he put on shoes when changing for dinner. Above all he loathed and detested the vision which the word "den" always conjured up to him. This was a vision of the door of a typical den being opened by a wife, and of the wife saying in a mincing voice: "This is George in his den," and of boarding-house females peering over the wife's shoulder and smiling fatuously at the denizen who, in an old shooting-jacket and slippers, grinned vacuously back at them. To Mark this was a horrible and unspeakable vision.

Mabel could not in the least understand it, and common sense and common custom were entirely on her side; Mark admitted that. The ridiculous and trivial affair only took on a deeper significance—not apparent to Mark at the time, but apparent later—in the fact that he could not make Mabel understand his attitude.

The matter of the den, and another matter, touching the servants, came up between them in the very earliest days of their married life. From London, on their return from their honeymoon, Mark had been urgently summoned to the sick bed of his father, in Chovensbury. Mabel proceeded to Crawshaws. He joined her a week later, his father happily recovered. Mabel had been busy "settling things," and she took him round the house with delicious pride and happiness. Mark, sharing both, had his arm linked in hers. When they came to the fourth sitting-room Mabel said gaily: "And this is your den!"

Mark gave a mock groan: "Oh, Lord, not den!"

"Yes, of course, den. Why ever not?"

"I absolutely can't stick den." He glanced about. "Who on earth left those fearful old slippers there?"

"They're a pair of father's. I took them specially for you for this room. You haven't got any slippers like that."

He gazed upon the heels downtrodden by her heavy father. He did not much like her heavy father. "No, I haven't," he said, and thought grimly: "Thank God!"

"But, Mark, what do you mean, you can't stick den?"

He explained, laughingly. He ended—"It's just like lounge-hall. Lounge-hall makes me feel perfectly sick. You're not going to call the hall a lounge hall are you?"

She was quite serious and the least little bit put out. "No—I'm not. But I can't see why not. I've never heard such funny ideas."

He was vaguely, transiently surprised at her attitude toward his funny ideas. "Well, come on, let's see up-stairs."

"Yes let's, dear."

He stepped out and she closed the door after them. "Well, that's your den."

As if he had never spoken! A vague and transient discomfort shot through him.

III

IT WAS when they came down again, completely happy and pleased, that the servant incident occurred. Mabel was down the stairs slightly before him and turned a smiling face up to him as he descended. "By Jove, it's jolly," he said. "We'll be happy here," and he kissed her.

"You'd better see the kitchen. It's awfully nice;" and they went along.

At the kitchen door she paused mysteriously and began in a mysterious whisper a long account of the servants. "I think they'll turn out quite nice girls. They're sisters, you know, and they're glad to be in a place together. They've both got young men in the village. Fancy, the cook told me that at Mrs. Wellington's where she was, at Chovensbury, she wasn't allowed to use soda for washing up because Mrs. Wellington fussed so frightfully about the pattern on her china. Fancy, in their family they've got eleven brothers and sisters. Isn't it awful how that kind of people——"

Her voice got lower and lower. She seemed to Mark to be quivering with some sort of repressed excitement, as though the two maids were some rare exhibit which she had captured with a net and placed in the kitchen and whom it was rather thrilling to open the door upon and peep at. He could hardly hear her voice and had to bend his head. It was dim in the lobby outside the kitchen door. The dimness, her intense whispers and her excitement, made him feel that he was in some

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mysterious conspiracy with her. The whole atmosphere of the house, and of this tour of inspection, which had been deliciously absorbing, became mysteriously conspiratorial. Unpleasing.

"The elder one's been to a school of cookery at Tidborough. She attended the whole course!"

"Good. That's the stuff!"

"Hush!"

Why hush? What a funny business this was.

IV

MABEL opened the kitchen door. "The master's come to see how nice the kitchen looks."

Two maids in black dresses and an extraordinary amount of stiffly starched aprons and caps and streamers, rose awkwardly and bobbed awkward little bows. One was very tall, the other rather short. The tall one looked extraordinarily severe and the short one extraordinarily glum, Mark thought, to have young men. Mabel looked from the girls to Mark and from Mark to the girls, precisely as if she were exhibiting rare specimens to her husband and her husband to her rare specimens. And in the tone of one exhibiting pinned, dried, and completely impersonal specimens, she announced. "They're sisters. Their name is Jinks."

Mark, examining the exhibits, had been feeling like a fool. Their name humanized them and relieved his awkward feeling. "Ha! Jinks eh? High Jinks and Low Jinks, what?" He laughed. It struck him as rather comic; and High Jinks and Low Jinks tittered broadly, losing in the most astonishing way, the one her severity and the other her glumness.

Mabel seemed suddenly to have lost her interest in her exhibits and their cage. She rather hurried Mark through the kitchen premises and, moving into the garden, replied rather abstractedly to his plans for the garden's development.

Suddenly she said, "Mark, I do wish you hadn't said that in the kitchen."

He was mentally examining the possibilities of a makeshift racket court against a corner of the stable and barn. "Eh, what in the kitchen, dear?"

"That about High Jinks and Low Jinks."

"Mabel, I swear we could fix up a topping sort of squash rackets in that corner. Those cobbles are worn absolutely smooth——"

"I wish you'd listen to me, Mark."

He caught his arm around her and gave her a playful squeeze. "Sorry, old girl, what was it? About High Jinks and Low Jinks? Ha! Dashed funny that, don't you think?"

"No, I don't. I don't think it's a bit funny."

Her tone was such that, relaxing his arm, he turned and gazed at her: "*Don't* you. Don't you really?"

"No, I don't. Far from funny."

Some instinct told him he ought not to laugh, but he could not help it. The idea appealed to him as distinctly and clearly comic. "Well, but it *is* funny. Don't you see? High Jinks alone is such a funny expression—sort of—well, you know what I mean. Something apart altogether from Low Jinks," and he laughed again.

Mabel compressed her lips. "I simply don't. Rebecca is not a bit like High Jinks."

He burst out laughing. "No, I'm dashed if she is. That's just it!"

"I really do not see it."

"Oh, go on, Mabel! Of course you do. You make it funnier. High Jinks and Low Jinks! I shall call them that."

"Mark." She spoke the word severely and paused severely. "Mark. I do most earnestly hope you'll do nothing of the kind."

He stared. Puzzled. He had tried to explain the absurd thing and she simply could not see it. "I simply don't."

And again that vague and transient discomfort shot through him.

V

SABRE awoke in the course of that night and lay awake. The absurd incident came immediately into his mind and remained in his mind. High Jinks and Low Jinks *was* comic. No getting over it. Incontestibly comic. Stupid, of course, but just the kind of stupid thing that tickled him irresistibly. And she couldn't see it. Absolutely could not see it. But if she was never going to see any of these stupid little things that appealed to him? And then he wrinkled his brows. "You remember how he used to wrinkle up his old nut," as the garrulous Hapgood had said.

A night-light, her wish, dimly illuminated the room. He raised himself and looked at her fondly, sleeping beside him. He thought "Dash it, the thing's been just the same from her point of view. That den business. She likes den and I can't stick den. Just the same for her as for me that High Jinks and Low Jinks tickles me and doesn't tickle her—"

He very gently moved with his finger a tress of her hair that had fallen upon her face. Mabel! His wife! How gently beneath her filmy bedgown her bosom rose and fell! How utterly calm her face was. How at peace, how secure, she lay there. He thought, "Three weeks ago she was sleeping in the terrific privacy of her own room, and here she is come to me in mine. Cut off from everything and everybody and come here to me."

An inexpressible tenderness filled him. He had a sudden sense of the poignant and tremendous adventure on which they were embarked together. They had been two lives and now they were one life, altering completely the lives they would have led singly; a new sea, a new ship on a new strange sea. What lay before them?

She stirred.

His thoughts continued. One life! One life out of two lives; one nature out of two natures! Mysterious and extraordinary metamorphosis. She had brought her nature to his, and he his nature to hers, and they were to mingle and become one nature. Absurdly and inappropriately his mind picked up and presented to him the grotesque words "High Jinks and Low Jinks" A note of laughter was irresistibly tickled out of him.

She said very sleepily, "Mark, are you laughing? What are you laughing at?"

He patted her shoulder. "Oh, nothing."

One nature?

(Continued on page 78)

Whenever you want anything from a hymn-book or a hassock to a pulpit or a tire you go to Fortune, East & Sabre.

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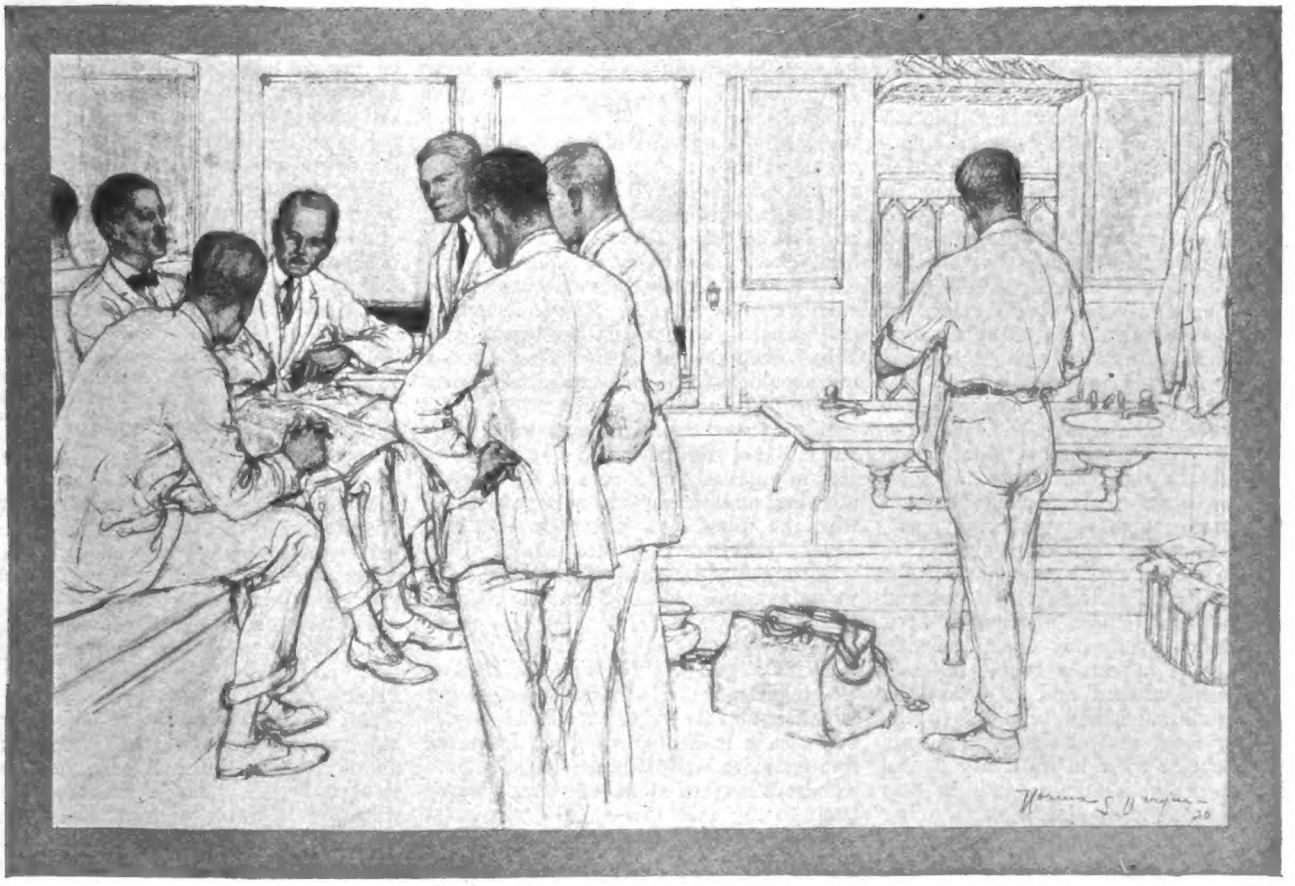

They shoved me into a seat and gathered round.

The Heart of a Boy

A CHRISTMAS STORY

By Ruth Sawyer

This is not only a story bright and warm with the spirit of Christmas, but a story—like all of Ruth Sawyer's—that reaches out and touches those heart-spots of human sympathy that are alive and sensitive in all of us the year round.

BY TRADE I am an insurance appraiser; by natural-born inclination I am an adventurer in human nature. If the first had not yielded me a good chance for the last I should never have knocked about four States adjusting claims on fire-damaged property for going on twenty-one years.

It's a funny thing how a man will size up human nature in terms of his own business. Take a mechanic, for instance. You will find he sees folks as good or bad machinery—running smooth and well oiled or grinding. Take a builder; he knows a man from his foundation up. Either he's weak or he's solid; seasoned timber or green, built to fool the public or an honest investment. Take me. I see human nature in terms of property and the fires that ravage it. I can't get away from the notion; catch myself picking out individuals in trains, hotels, any place at all, and saying to myself:

"There's a frail bit of real estate. First spark that strikes that chap and the first puff of adversity that blows on it will make a clean sweep in no time. He'll make a pretty heap of charred timber."

And again says I: "There's a damp, moldy old structure. When fire takes her she'll make a nasty smudge and smoke on till eternity. No decent white ashes there to fertilize the earth for some one to work in afterward."

But on the ground floor I am an optimist. More often than not I see people that look safe and sound. Then I say: "The trim may burn out there a bit or the soot in the chimneys catch and give them a scare; but no matter what kind of a conflagration strikes them you'll find them standing solid—four walls and roof—ready for rebuilding."

Sometimes I run across some one straight fire-proof. I can tell them in a jiffy and I've never missed on my appraisal yet. You can watch them tried out with all the ordinary combustibles and explosives and stand them out alone in a strong wind and though they may scorch and shake they'll never burn or blow up. Nothing short of complete annihilation gets them; and even then the memory of them stands secure and everlasting. Of course that kind is a bit rare, but I run across them once in a while and when I do, I always think I'll roll down the corrugated lid of my desk, pass on my key to a successor and pitch into writing fiction—true fiction.

In the meantime I hang on to my adventures in human nature and spin my yarns, *verbatim*, to some of the older inhabitants of the Pullman car I travel with. There's one yarn in particular I like to tell. I reckon it's because I saw the thing start, and happened along on the near-finish. Besides, it's old-fashioned enough to reach a man's heart and human enough to tickle his understanding.

There had been a big fire in one of the buildings of an up-state university late in December, and four days before Christmas I took the night train for that town to look over the damage and settle the insurance. The university is big and important enough for two railroads to run special sleepers up every night and name

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them for the college and the town. That is the way it happened that I found myself the one outsider in a car packed full of college boys. For the first half-minute I got turned about and laid all their noise and good spirits down to Christmas vacation and going home. Then I realized my mental processes were in reverse and the boys were headed the wrong way for home. A more careful look over the carful brought out another fact—the boys had all passed the regular student age and there was a tinge of maturity about them that the average undergraduate doesn't carry. You see I cover a pretty big area and it holds five big Eastern universities; so I know the college type—cub and man—fairly well.

I settled myself for some fun. I was going to watch them turn loose and skim off the cream of their good spirits and youth for my own personal enjoyment, and I knew they would pay as little attention to me as if I were part of the car trappings. The train pulled out and I was chuckling under my breath at a good grind a stocky boy down the aisle got off, when a man a couple of seats away turned around and I noticed he looked familiar. I had been up to the university town several times—fires were sort of popular there in fraternity houses and old college-buildings—and it was natural enough to be picking out familiar faces among a bunch of boys that plainly belonged there—present or past. Then a red-haired boy came teetering down the aisle; hands in pockets and laughing. There was something in that hair and laugh more familiar than the other's face; and just then the bunch at the back of the car broke suddenly into an old tune:

"Oh— We are the old Kappa Deltas,
We are the old Kappa Deltas,
We are the old Kappa Deltas,
And— May we never forget!"

That song was a sort of landmark. You know how it is when you strike a strange town at night that you've been in only once or twice before? You see a street that might be any old street—nothing on it looks familiar; you can't recall a face or a place; and then, all of a sudden, something looms out of the blackness that you remember—the meeting-house or the town-hall; and the next minute you can pick out the corner drug-store and the ball-field and the tavern and the town hitching-post—all as friendly-looking and natural as life. Well, I forgot all about my intention of keeping quiet and watching the fun, and the first thing I knew I was shaking hands with the red-haired boy and telling him how glad I was to fall in with some of the Kappa Deltas again.

HE GRIPPED back but I could see he was as much in the dark as I had been a few minutes before—so were the others round us. I laughed and helped them out. "Don't remember? Neither did I till you started that old tune. Then it came over me like a flash: Nipping cold night like this—hydrant running icicles—flames of hell licking up the hill and a stygian blackness everywhere else. Everybody yelling like maniacs and the wind blowing a billion miles an hour off a frozen lake." And seeing them still combing their memories, I added— "My name's Fuller—Fireman's Continental and Mutual—came up two years ago to adjust the claim on the medical building and happened in, unofficially, on the burning of the Kappa Delta house."

Then they knew. They were all out of their seats in a jiffy, shaking my hand and calling themselves guy-names for not remembering sooner. You see I had sort of given a hand with saving the furniture, and had carried out a poor, lean, smoked-herring of a boy who had gone to bed early and slept himself into a stupor. We couldn't wake him up. They all seemed as pleased to have me in the bunch as if I had been one of them. They shoved me, shoulders-down, into one of their seats and gathered round.

"Guess we none of us ever knew your name," said the red-haired boy, "but we certainly passed you a vote of thanks next morning; and Slimmy was as sore as a boil when he found you had gone and he'd never rendered appropriate thanks. That was some old bonfire. Thank the Lord we've put up something that isn't tinder this time."

"FINE," said I. "Nothing like building against fire. If a few more people get to putting up that kind they'll put us out of business in short order, and leave me free again to write fiction—true fiction." The boys laughed at the idea and I lapsed back to my memories— "Do you know what stands out plainest in all that rumpus of yours—the thing I can't forget? It's the smell of boiling coffee, and the taste of home-made doughnuts, and the bent figure of a little old lady climbing out of the blackness below into that flare of light and bedlam. I can see her smile now as she passed out those mugs of steaming hot coffee. I remember her hair was so white it looked pink in the firelight, and for all she was bent and wrinkled, her eyes shone like a girl's."

The boys were not looking at me; they were looking at each other. They were wagging their heads and grinning as if some huge joke was passing silently from one to another and the red-haired boy said, "See—never laid eyes on her before—perfect stranger—and yet he remembers. I tell you, boys, she's the kind that will always be remembered — remembered and——"

He did not finish, but I had a hunch from the way he said the first, that the missing word was "loved." The stocky chap they called "Stodgy" that I first picked out as looking familiar broke in on him. "Sure thing—and the doughnuts. Can you beat her doughnuts anywhere—and does another soul on this green earth coax a coffee-pot into exhaling such odors?"

"What's the matter with her lemon-pie? What's the matter with her waffles?"

This was chanted out with almost religious fervor by a boy behind me. I couldn't see his face but I would have been willing to swear it looked like a Sabbath morning. In a flash I could see I had struck something more than a mere memory with them. There was something deeper than doughnuts in their faces now and the red-haired boy grinned sheepishly. Funny thing! It's been my experience in human adventuring to find that red-haired masculines invariably run to sentiment. I don't mean the mawkish kind of sentiment but the straight-from-the-heart-hope-I-may-die kind. This time I scented something in the way of old-fashioned romance and so I focused strong on the red-haired one beside me. "Let's hear about her," said I; "thought about her a lot of times, and wondered what she did when there were no frat houses burning down, and no black-faced frozen boys to keep warmed up and cheered up and mothered in general. I'll bet you, she's sort of an institution herself in the university."

"She's the best thing on the campus," said the red-haired boy. And the whole bunch broke into a jubilee chorus:

"What's the matter with Aunt Mary Ellen!
What's the matter with Aunt Mary Ellen!
What's the matter with Aunt Mary Ellen!
She's the very best thing going round—
round—round—
She's the very best thing going round!"

The porter came down the aisle grinning with the rest. He nodded at me as being part spectator along with himself, "Sounds mighty cheerful and home-like," he whispered in my ear.

The boy back of me called over my head to a ruddy-cheeked chap in the seat opposite, "Say, Welsh, you tell him about the Paisley shawl."

But I leaned forward and laid a silencing hand on Welsh's arm. "Hold on a minute," says I, "if this be a yarn—as I think it be—let's start right. I want the whole of it, from where I left off two years ago this month down to the present moment. Seems to me I remember a pedagog person who figured in somewhere—and a wife attachment. Have a vague notion that when they appeared in that little house under the hill where the old lady lived and the hot coffee came from, that somehow all the joy in life suddenly went out for the little old lady. Right before my eyes she seemed to wither and wither, and her smile began to fade and fade, and her eyes lost all of their shine. Come, spin us the yarn."

Well, they spun it all right; only it was more like having the crazy pieces of a jig-saw puzzle slung at me—for every boy insisted on contributing his bit. If it hadn't been for what happened the next night I doubt if I should ever have straightened out the jumble. But here it is, after I put it together on my way home. The details may be hazy but the facts are here in the main and the boys saw to it that the climax got in in the right place.

TO BEGIN with, the house under the hill belonged to the pedagog person. He was a professor—the leading professor of psychology. His wife's name was Susan, an admirable person who managed the professor, the household, a large portion of the campus, a club or two; everything but the children. There were two of these, nice enough but trying.

Aunt Mary Ellen lived with them. She was blood aunt to Susan; but by right of big-heartedness and adoption she was Aunt Mary Ellen to every one on the campus who was out of luck and needed any one from a hired girl to a trained nurse. A pair of willing, capable hands, matched with a pair of untiring feet seemed to be Aunt Mary Ellen's two main assets; and apparently all she asked out of life was a chance to use them. When the professor of mathematics' family had whooping-cough—down to the sixth growing member—

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and no nurse practical or trained could be procured, Aunt Mary Ellen was loaned for the purpose of jumping on deck any hour of the day or night with a bowl in one hand and an inhaler in the other. It was quoted publicly that the wife of the professor of mathematics said she owed the baby's life to Susan's generosity—in lending Aunt Mary Ellen.

When the Department of Romance Languages had the measles Aunt Mary Ellen was loaned again; likewise when the infirmary was full up with typhoid and there were not nurses enough to go round; likewise when the English Department had the mumps and Mrs. English had gone home to nurse her mother through a last illness. She seemed to figure strong when unexpected company arrived on members of the faculty—or babies came a little off schedule. Susan had evidently built up a great reputation for generosity and unselfishness just by loaning out Aunt Mary Ellen in all academic crises; and she never failed to save up all her own household work for her to do when she came back home again. From all accounts, the university managed to keep Aunt Mary Ellen pretty busy—she was as catching as a cold, only a durned sight pleasanter. As far as I could make out, everybody took their cue from Susan and treated Aunt Mary Ellen the same; she was regarded like any household remedy—soothing and effectual; but kept on the shelf in the cupboard when not needed.

She had been part of a legacy left by Susan's father to Susan herself. There had been a tidy little sum of money and a lot of fine old Sheraton furniture, Wedgwood and Colonial silver. Reckon the family in Aunt Mary Ellen's youth had experienced reverses and the only member to get back into the game again had been Susan's father. Anyway he had everything and left it to Susan; and Aunt Mary Ellen packed up along with the heirlooms and started all over again to earn her board and keep through another generation. It appears she never owned anything at all herself but an old Paisley shawl that was her mother's.

MAYBE you can figure out for yourself what it must be like to be a working member of two families for twenty-odd years and have nothing you could call your own but your mother's old shawl. No spending money, no nothing, no knick-knacks, no time that was really yours by right of ownership or purchase; always being beholden to some one for the dresses she chose to pass down to you, and the food she put on your plate. Picture that, I say, and then picture Aunt Mary Ellen with hair as white as a mid-winter snowbank, and cheeks the color of old-fashioned pinks, and a smile that held fast to some promise of youth and good hope. No martyred spirit about her, no victim-of-circumstance look, no pity-my-lot whimpering voice. Straight fire-proof from roof to cellar, say I.

She didn't even get sour over the way folks would work her in their time of trouble, and then forget her and leave her out when the picnics and the parties came along. No one apparently gave any thought to her happiness or saw to it that she got even a small hunk of life that was her own. When church suppers and campus gatherings came around Aunt Mary Ellen stayed home to mind the children. Some one had to stay, bless you, and Susan was needed to represent the Department of Psychology along with the professor.

But Aunt Mary Ellen had a regular genius for acquiring scraps of life in spite of every one. The boys on the campus just naturally took to her. They'd link an arm in hers and help her up the hill or down, on their way to and from classes; they'd fall in with her and lend a hand with Psychology Junior's go-cart. She was always walking places, airing the children or running errands, when she wasn't doing housework; naturally had to walk, for she never had any car-fare of her own, and nobody thought to supply her with any. A cousin sent her five dollars every Christmas and that had to see her through the three hundred and sixty-five days of the rising cost of living.

HALF-WAY up the hill, right back of her house, lived the Kappa Deltas, and she came to know these boys the best of all. Their tennis-court abutted on the professor of psychology's back yard, and the intimacy began when Ted Bartholomew—who is judge of a supreme court now—dropped his racket to help Aunt Mary Ellen in with the family washing, in the teeth of one of the worst thunder-storms that ever burst over the town. After that she got Ted and his room-mate—and finally the whole houseful—to fetch down their socks and the garments that were minus buttons, and she'd mend them up evenings when the children were asleep and the Psychology Department was out to some party. The boys had a sneaking notion her contract for work was pretty heavy as it was, and they hung back at first; but Ted sort of plumbed the situation for them, he said he guessed that was one of the ways she got her happiness out of life.

"There are women like that," said he, who just have to mother the whole universe. They keep taking on more and more who look as if they needed it—just for the bare love of the job with no returns expected. No use holding back, boys, as I see it."

So they got into the habit of fetching their things down pretty regularly, and they'd stop and chin a few minutes to tell her the news. They'd ask her advice, too, about the new pledges and how she liked their latest neckties.

"Gee, you ought to hear the way she can size a fellow up." It was the boy back of me who said this and the red-haired boy chuckled.

"For all she was so motherly and had a real woman's way about her when it came to judging boys or picking out a necktie she was all boy, herself. And pleased! I guess you never saw any one so pleased over—over—just our asking her."

You see, Susan was so all-fired sufficient I reckon it would never occur to her to ask Aunt Mary Ellen's opinion on anything. She naturally took it for granted that hers was a lot better; and it's human nature the world over to discount anything we get for nothing. Well, at the end of the first year the boys wanted to do something for Aunt Mary Ellen by way of a real chunk of happiness. They had never seen her at any of the college shows or celebrations so they didn't know what she would enjoy; but on a chance they bought her a season ticket for the concerts they have every year in University Hall; bought it next to theirs. They mailed it to her with a round robin letter telling her what a lot they thought of her and how they wanted to pay back in a small way some of the stitches and smiles she'd put into the past year for them.

Late the next afternoon at dusk she appeared in her usual blue gingham dress, the letter in her hand. There was a rim of red about her eyes that looked sort of suspicious. The boys saw her coming and went out on the porch to meet her.

"Boys," said she, "you've all made me awfully happy—but I can't go. It mustn't hurt your feelings; but please take the ticket back and ask the sweetest and prettiest of all your girls to go in my place."

"Don't you like music?" asked one of them. No one knew exactly what to say, for they had all thought she would be tickled to death to go.

"Like it!" She said it with a little gasp. "Why, I like it better than almost everything else—except boys. It isn't that—no indeed. You see Susan and the Professor always go and they count on me to stay with the children. I couldn't disappoint them."

THE red-haired boy—who was a freshman that year—said he hated music and would like nothing better than to stay behind and mind the kids. I reckon he sort of relished the idea of having a chance to give them a good dressing down, but Aunt Mary Ellen's eyes only got a little redder round the rims, and she shook her head.

"Thank you—but Susan wouldn't listen to it. She's very particular about the children and she wouldn't understand. And—and—I couldn't go anyway. I never go out enough to have a—suitable dress."

She thrust the ticket over quickly to one of the boys and hurried down the hill; and the Kappa Deltas looked after her with sober eyes and swore something awful.

That set the boys to thinking harder than ever. You know how it is when a person doesn't sit around and whine out loud for pleasure. A lot get left. I reckon that Susan and the professor had grown to believe that Aunt Mary Ellen didn't care about going anywhere just because she never talked about it; besides, it's so darnation easy for young folks to make themselves believe that old folks like to stay home. Well, that's the way the boys looked at it and they swore they'd make it up to her somehow, someway. They found that Susan and the professor always stayed home with the children on Sunday afternoons, so there was no reason handy for them to hang on to Aunt Mary Ellen. That's how it came to be another regular habit for a bunch of them to appear on a Sunday afternoon and carry her off for a few hours fun with them in the Kappa Delta house up the hill.

They would put her into a big armchair by the fire, roll out the victrola and start her going with all the stuff she liked best. Then they'd stretch out on the floor around her with their pipes and they'd have a great powwow.

"As long as a lot of us couldn't get to home and mother, why we just brought a combination club meal of it to us," said

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It came to be a regular habit for a bunch of them to appear on a Sunday afternoon and carry her off for a few hours' fun with them in the Kappa Delta house up the hill.

the red-haired boy. "And Aunt Mary Ellen certainly worked out a good all-balanced ration in my four years. How was it with you Stodgy?"

"Same here," Stodgy beamed. "She'd just fit into any old party any old time. Wet or dry, indoors or out, girls along or just by ourselves, Aunt Mary Ellen would always make a good time a little better."

Whereupon the whole carful busted into the yarn by shouting: "What's the matter with Aunt Mary Ellen? She's—all—right!"

SOMETIMES they'd keep her for supper. Their chef always went out Sundays after dinner and the boys usually rustled a cold lunch for themselves. But when Aunt Mary Ellen stayed there were high jinks. They'd put her on the kitchen table to give directions while the boys fetched and carried, mixed, beat and baked. Any one who knows how boys dote on getting in a kitchen and messing up raw ingredients can get a faint notion of how much fun the Kappa Deltas got out of those evenings. Any big-hearted woman would have been glad to bake the boys some biscuits or fry them a round of waffles; but what other soul this side of heaven would have thought to let the boys do for themselves, giving them just help enough to steer them clear of failure.

Well, this went on for a few years. The boys that were froshies became seniors and graduated, and more froshies took their places. And every last one of them was as keen for Aunt Mary Ellen as the original bunch that adopted her. Then came the Kappa Delta fire.

I found there was a lot about that fire I didn't take in at the time or forgot afterwards. It started about ten. Ice on the hill so the fire trucks couldn't get up; and ice on the hydrants so the campus company couldn't do anything but watch it burn and help to save the furniture. There was a concert on that night, and Aunt Mary Ellen was tending children as per usual, when the fire-whistle blew. Almost immediately she saw the flames shooting back of the kitchen window. She was sitting in the kitchen to keep warm and save coal. All in a heap she knew there wouldn't be many of the boys around. Some would be at the concert; some more at the gymnasium drilling, and others scattered about. She'd known them so long, you see, she knew their haunts and their habits, and in just about two minutes she'd rounded them all up on the 'phone and had them scooting for home. They got there just about the time the boys in the house got to wondering how to get hold of them.

Yes, sir, it was Aunt Mary Ellen who got all hands on deck, and then set to work stirring up the fire and putting on the biggest pots to boil. She knew there'd be a nipping cold a couple of hours ahead for her boys, and she was going to be ready for them.

When the coffee was boiling she got out Psychology Junior's go-cart, and put in a lot of mugs and the doughnuts she had made for Susan to take to the church supper the next day, and, last of all, one of the pots of coffee; all creamed and sugared and ready to drink. Then she got into the professor's goloshes and sheepskin coat and up the hill she came guiding the go-cart straight into the circle of light outside the deadline. How the boys cheered when they saw her! Though their lungs were choked with smoke. She passed out coffee and doughnuts and smiles as fast as they make them; and when her supply was gone she went down the hill for more. I reckon she went up and down that hill forty-nine times before the fire was out and the boys ready to quit; after that she gathered them all into the kitchen for a last cup and to dress the burns that were worst.

It was just here that Susan and the professor made their entrance. They emerged out of the blackness to stand in the kitchen doorway looking as if they had seen horrible things and smelt horrible smells. Of course the boys had brought in considerable slush and dirt which dripped over the floor; and the air was heavy with the fumes of burned wet wool. Ever smell it? Well, Susan said something about waking up the children. The professor said something about coffee enough for breakfast. Susan looked at the three doughnuts left gracing the table and asked if they were intended for the church supper; and the professor remarked that it was discouraging trying to heat a house when the doors were all left open.

THAT was the time I remembered watching Aunt Mary Ellen fade. She went out like a snuffed candle. All that night she had worked like a girl; her eyes had sparkled, her smile was the youngest, freshest thing I ever saw; and she had rallied those boys and warmed their hearts as well as their stomachs. But now of

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a sudden we saw her turn into an old woman—a tired, withered old woman; springtime was gone and winter stood all about her. And the boys sensed what had happened and knew there was nothing they could say. They just turned their grimy, dripping selves about and marched out into the blackness again to find sleeping quarters where they could.

"Now you tell about the Paisley shawl," said the boy back of me.

The others coughed uncomfortably and the red-haired boy explained. "I saw it down in Keddy's window a few days after. Keddy keeps a general antique and gift shop and I knew that shawl the instant I set eyes on it; so I went in and asked him how he got it." He stopped a moment and swallowed hard. "You see us boys got to know that shawl pretty well. She used to slip it over her shoulders when she came up to the house on Sundays—she was awfully fond of it. Well, old Keddy told me where he got it and the picture he drew was, line for line, Aunt Mary Ellen. She said she was anxious to sell it and he had given her ten dollars for it."

"Ten dollars!" The whole bunch snorted it in chorus.

The train swung along in silence for a minute or two. I looked at my watch—it was long past time to turn in, but I wasn't ready to turn. "What was the idea?" I asked.

The boys didn't look sheepish any more—they looked grim and accusing. "We're not absolutely sure," said Stodgy, "but as near as we could figure it out she had sold it to pay back for the coffee and fixings that night. Aunt Mary Ellen is terribly proud and terribly fair. You can see how she reasoned it out—she'd been giving away stuff that didn't belong to her; but it wasn't until the department got home that she woke up to it. Then she simply had to make the gift hers. Get the idea now?"

I certainly did. "What happened to the shawl?" I finally asked.

The boy on the seat opposite started to answer but the red-haired boy leaned across and quickly muffled him. "No you don't," said he. "Look here, boys; suppose we ask Mr. Fuller to stop over for to-morrow night to see what happened for himself."

"Sure thing," agreed the chorus.

THE red-haired boy got up and stretched himself, then he turned back to me for an instant, "You saw the old Kappa Delta burn, you ought to be in on the opening of the new. Step around about eight-thirty to-morrow night and see how we're going to do it."

"Combination house-warming, Christmas party and—" Again it was Stodgy who began and again the red-haired boy muffled him. "Just come along," said he.

I settled my business long before eight-thirty the next day and for the remaining hours I was as restless and excited as a kid going to his first party. I hadn't any evening togs but I bought a new scarlet necktie and stuck a sprig of holly in my buttonhole and arrived ten minutes early. I had a hunch as to what might be going to happen, so I fetched along a little tissue paper package in my pocket and when no one was looking I tucked it under the rippingest Christmas tree I ever saw.

It stood in one corner of a living-room that had a chimney up the middle, with four fireplaces round it—all burning together. Maybe there wasn't a cheery blaze and crackle going on; and everywhere the smell of balsam and Christmas greens. The room was finished off with polished rafters, all festooned; and wreaths of holly were everywhere. There were all the boys on the train and a thousand more—pretty nearly. Fresh kid ones, just in the university, and graybeards who had been out for a score of years or more. And the oldest grinning with the youngest.

THE ones I knew flocked over and passed me around among the others. Every man jack of them had a Kappa Delta pin on the lapel of his evening coat and by the time I had made the rounds I figured I was the only outsider present. They made me as welcome as if I had been a Christmas package myself—don't believe I ever felt the cockles of my heart cockle so hard. There was something about that house and the boys—for they were all boys that night—that seemed so chuck full of Christmas that I felt if I never set eyes on another celebration as long as I lived the memory of this one would last me through to Kingdom Come.

"Looks to me like a reunion," I said to one of the graybeards next to me"; only I thought you boys generally reuned on Spring Day or Commencement."

"We do—generally. This is a special occasion. Didn't Reddy or any of the New York bunch tell you?"

"They called it a house-warming."

"Well it is—and a heart-warming. Wait and see."

I was just getting to the point when I was losing faith in my own hunch and making up my mind I was going to be the only guest that night; when an outside door banged open and a gust of cold air blew in, sending the spirals of smoke zigzagging up the chimney and setting all the ornaments on the Christmas tree to tinkling. The boys swung round to attention as if they were at drill, and facing the door they burst into a hallelujah chorus:

"Here's to Aunt Mary Ellen—
Here's to Aunt Mary Ellen—
Here's to Aunt Mary Ellen—
And—may we never forget!"

Into the room, between the red-haired boy and the one I remembered as Slimmy, came the little old lady as I remembered her first—with her cheeks like old-fashioned pinks, and her eyes shining like a girl's. It was plain that she hadn't an inkling who the party was for; and so empty was she of any personal conceit that she didn't even look self-conscious. When she saw it was a reunion and the old boys were back she spread both her hands in a little gesture of gladness and her voice just cried out with it:

"Why Patsy Gallagher—Welsh—Stodgy—Dan'el Boone—Scottie McPherson—Ted—Ted Bartholomew!" And with that she flew across the space between them; and the judge of the supreme court swung her clean off her feet and hugged her as if she had been a youngster.

She hadn't forgotten a boy. As Slimmy said afterward, it was just as if she had treasured every little scrap of memory for them all. Even the older ones who hadn't come back since her day of mothering them and who were only a tradition with her—she knew all about them the minute she heard their names, and welcomed them as if they had been her own. It was my turn to step aside and be merely a spectator; and maybe I wasn't glad to be one!

The bunch very nearly ate her alive. If I hadn't seen what had happened two years before and watched her trudging up and down that hill in the pitch blackness, pushing a go-cart, I would never have believed that one rather plain, white-haired little lady could have meant so much to a crowd of boys.

Knowing she loved music, they put her in a chair by the chimney and sang for her. Jupiter, how they sang! Mix a bunch of alumni with another of undergrads and start them off on their college and fraternity songs and they'll sing your heart straight into your throat. I reckon they can even sing back the souls of their own dead. Anyway I got to feeling so wet and choky I pulled out my handkerchief to get ready to sneeze hard; and I caught Aunt Mary Ellen weeping right out, just like a South American rainy season.

THEY finished off with a nonsense Christmas jingle, danced around the tree and came back to the fireplaces to bunch as close on the floor around Aunt Mary Ellen as they could. Then the red-haired boy gave out the presents on the tree. They were all grinds—all but the last three. One of these was for me and two for Aunt Mary Ellen. They gave her first the tissue-paper package I had tucked in. It was an old cameo pin with pearls about it.

I had seen it that morning in a jeweler's window, and it looked so like Aunt Mary Ellen and the Paisley shawl, I had to go in and get it. I reckon she liked it; but the funny thing about it was that the boys were as tickled as she was.

After that came a small box for me and inside was a latch-key. The tag tied to it read: "Whenever you strike this little old town—lift up the latch and let your grip down." And Aunt Mary Ellen had had another box and another key; only hers was a common inside door key, and there were no instructions to go with it. She looked at it a little bewildered and Ted Bartholomew sang out:

"Looks to me as if Santa Claus forgot some of the present. There ought to be a door somewhere to belong to that key. Say we find it."

She didn't catch on even then; neither did I. But she sensed some kind of a joke and was ready for it. She hopped out of her chair, laughing. "All I hope is that it isn't a *Bluebeard* key. I don't want to open a closet and find any of your dead loves—or dead hopes," and in spite of her laughter there was a catch in her voice. Then she linked her arm in the red-haired boy's and added, "I need you, Reddy, for moral support. Sometimes I'm a very timid old woman."

Ted Bartholomew picked up a cane and fastened a Kappa Delta banner to it. He led the procession as drum major and the rest of us fell in, two by two. The boys broke into a good marching chorus and over the house we went looking for the door to fit the key. Funny thing—but every door was locked. We went the rounds downstairs and then we went

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up. Down the right wing, doors both sides, Aunt Mary Ellen tried every one but the key wouldn't fit. We crossed the stair-landing and started down the left. The boys were fairly shouting now. Lump the Soldiers' and the Pilgrims' choruses together and add to that the *ensemble* from the "Huguenots" and a few "Valkyrie" yells, and you'll get some idea of the effect as we reached the end of the wing. The key was fitted in that door; there was a stilly moment of absolute silence broken by a gasp from Aunt Mary Ellen.

"Goodness gracious! It's turning," said she, and the next moment the door flew open in real fairy-book style.

The red-haired boy pushed Aunt Mary Ellen over the threshold; and I, forgetting all the manners of a gentleman—forgetting everything but my confounded boy-curiosity—shoved myself along the wall and sneaked in after her. And what did I see?

Two rooms, bedroom and sitting-room, opening into each other and stretching the width of the wing. They were all bright chintz and old mahogany; with quaint old prints on the walls and shelves full of books and flowers on the mantel and desk and table and everywhere. There was even a sewing-table all fitted up and beside it a pile of socks all crying for first aid. Under the mantel was a fireplace and on the fireplace was a fire all lighted and burning; and beside the fire was a low armchair and over the back of the armchair hung an old Paisley shawl.

It took Aunt Mary Ellen about thirty seconds to see it. With a little sob she broke away from the red-haired boy, dropped down on her knees in front of that chair and buried her face in the shawl. No one said a word. We backed away on tip-toes and the red-haired boy closed the door softly behind us.

No one spoke again until we had reached the living-room and cleared our throats a few times. Stodgy got his clear first and he chuckled:

"We were voting on fitting up a bowling-alley in the basement when Reddy said, 'What's the matter with fitting up a room on the second floor for Aunt Mary Ellen, instead?' We put it to complete chapter vote and she carried it unanimously."

I turned to the red-haired boy. He was turning a bright peony color and was looking sheepish again. "So you're the guilty one," says I.

"Oh, I don't know." Then he gave his chin a funny little jerk and shrugged his shoulders. "Looked to me as if Aunt Mary Ellen was a dog-goned sight better investment than a bowling alley—can't do but one blamed thing with a bowling-alley and she's good for almost everything." He pulled my sleeve and whispered, "You think she likes the idea, don't you? There's more to it than just the rooms, you know. Things in the closet—pretty things; and a tidy little sum every month to be put to her account in the trust company. She's never going to be without spending-money again—not so long as there's a Kappa Delta atop of green earth."

But there was one thing more I wanted to know, "How'd you fix it up with the Psychology Department?" for I figured that Susan wouldn't part with such a valuable legacy without a murmur.

The red-haired boy chuckled: "Ted fixed it up. He's a trustee of the university besides everything else. He called sort of semi-officially and made it plain that they could choose between two resignations—Aunt Mary Ellen's or the Department's."

And just then the campus chimes began to ring; and softly, very softly the boys sang the carol "It came upon a midnight clear." You know it. They sang it through just as if they were thinking as I was thinking, of that little bent figure up-stairs hugging her old shawl. And the red-haired boy whispered again in my ear:

"She just naturally belongs to Christmas—like all mothers—doesn't she?"

And just then the campus chimes began to ring; and very softly the boys sang the carol, "It came upon a midnight clear."

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Timber

By John Galsworthy

A short story by Galsworthy is an event—he writes so few and those few always so movingly and searchingly fine. His new play, "The Skin Game," such a success in London, will be seen here this winter, and there are rumors that he himself may be over. In Alexander Woollcott's article on another page of this issue, there are some interesting things about this play and about him. Turn to them after you read this masterly story.

SIR ARTHUR HIRRIES, Baronet, of Hirriehugh, in a northern county, came to the decision to sell his timber in that state of mind—common during the war—which may be called patrio-profiteering. Like newspaper proprietors, writers on strategy, ship-builders, owners of works, makers of arms and the rest of the working classes at large, his mood was: "Let me serve my country, and if thereby my profits are increased, let me put up with it, and invest in national bonds."

With an encumbered estate and some of the best coverts in that northern county, it had not become practical politics to sell his timber till the Government wanted it at any price. To let his shooting had been more profitable, till now a patriotic action and a stroke of business had become synonymous. A man of sixty-five, but not yet gray, with a reddish tinge in his mustache, cheeks, lips and eyelids, slightly knock-kneed, and with large, rather spreading feet, he moved in the best circles in a somewhat embarrassed manner. At the enhanced price the timber at Hirriehugh would enfranchise him for the remainder of his days. He sold it, therefore, one day of April, when the war news was bad, to a Government official on the spot. He sold it at half-past five in the afternoon, practically for cash down, and drank a stiff whisky and soda to wash away the taste of the transaction; for, though no sentimentalist, his great-great-grandfather had planted most of it and his grandfather the rest. Royalty, too, had shot there in its time; and he himself (never much of a sportsman) had missed more birds in the rides and hollows of his fine coverts than he cared to remember. But the country was in need and the price considerable. Bidding the Government official good-by, he lighted a cigar and went across the park to take a farewell stroll among his timber.

He entered the home covert by a path leading through a group of pear-trees just coming into bloom. Smoking cigars and drinking whisky in the afternoon in preference to tea, Sir Arthur Hirries had not much sense of natural beauty. But those pear-trees impressed him, greenish white against the blue sky and fleecy thick clouds which looked as if they had snow in them. They were deuced pretty, and promised a good year for fruit, if they escaped the late frosts, though it certainly looked like freezing to-night! He paused a moment at the wicket gate to glance back at those scantily clothed white maidens posing on the outskirts of his timber. Such was not the vision of Sir Arthur Hirries, who was considering how he should invest the balance of the cash down after paying off his mortgages. National bonds—the country was in need!

Passing through the gate, he entered the ride of the home covert. Variety lay like color on his woods. They stretched for miles, and his ancestors had planted almost every kind of tree; beech, oak, birch, sycamore, ash, elm, hazel, holly, pine; a lime-tree and a hornbeam here and there, and, farther in among the winding coverts, spinneys and belts of larch. The evening air was sharp, and sleet showers came whirling from those bright clouds; he walked briskly, drawing at his richly fragrant cigar, the whisky still warm within him. He walked thinking, with a gentle melancholy slowly turning a little sulky, that he would never again be pointing out with his shooting-stick to such or such a guest where he was to stand to get the best birds over him.

The pheasants had been let down during the war, but he put up two or three old cocks, who went clattering and whirring out to left and right; and rabbits crossed the rides quietly to and fro within easy shot. He came to where royalty had stood fifteen years ago during the last drive. He remembered royalty saying: "Very pretty shooting at that last stand, Hirries; birds just about as high as I like them." The ground indeed rose rather steeply there, and the timber was oak and ash, with a few dark pines sprinkled into the bare grayish twiggery of the oaks, always costive in spring, and the just greening feather of the ashes.

"They'll be cutting those pines first," he thought—strapping trees, straight as lines in Euclid, and free of branches, save at their tops. In the brisk wind those tops swayed a little and gave forth soft complaint. "Three times my age," he thought; "prime timber."

THE ride wound sharply and entered a belt of larch, whose steep rise entirely barred off the rather sinister sunset—a dark and wistful wood, delicate dun and gray, whose green shoots and crimson tips would have scented the evening coolness, but for the cigar smoke in his nostrils. "They'll have this spinney for pit-props," he thought; and, taking a cross ride through it, he emerged in a heathery glen of birch-trees. No forester, he wondered if they would make anything of those whitened, glistening shapes. His cigar had gone out now, and he leaned against one of the satin-smooth stems, under the lacery of twig and bud, sheltering the flame of a relighting match. A hare loped away among the bilberry shoots; a jay, painted like a fan, squawked and flustered past him up the glen. Interested in birds, and wanting just one more jay to complete a fine stuffed group of them, Sir Arthur, though devoid of a gun, followed, to see where "the beggar's" nest was.

The glen dipped rapidly, and the character of the timber changed, assuming greater girth and solidity. There was a lot of beech here—a bit he did not know, for though taken in by the beaters, no guns could be stationed there because of the lack of undergrowth. The jay had vanished, and light had begun to fail. "I must get back," he thought, "or I shall be late for dinner." He debated for a moment whether to retrace his steps or to cut across the beeches and regain the home covert by a loop. The jay, reappearing to the left, decided him to cross the beech grove. He did so, and took a narrow ride up through a dark bit of mixed timber with heavy undergrowth. The ride, after favoring the left for a little, bent away to the right; Sir Arthur followed it hurriedly, conscious that twilight was gathering fast. It must bend again to the left in a minute! It did and then to the right, and, the undergrowth remaining thick, he could only follow on, or else retrace his steps. He followed on, beginning to get hot in spite of a sleet shower falling through the dusk. He was not framed by nature for swift traveling—his knees turning in and his toes turning out—but he went at a good bat, uncomfortably aware that the ride was still taking him away from home, and expecting it at any minute to turn left again. It did not, and hot, out of breath, a little bewildered, he stood still in three-quarter darkness, to listen. Not a sound, save that of wind in the tops of the trees and a faint creaking of timber where two stems had grown athwart and were touching.

THE path was a regular will-o'-the-wisp. He must make a bee-line of it through the undergrowth into another ride! He had never before been among his timber in the dusk, and he found the shapes of the confounded trees more weird, and as if menacing, than he had ever dreamed of. He stumbled quickly on in and out of them among the undergrowth without coming to a ride.

"Here I am stuck in this damned wood!" he thought. To call these formidably encircling shapes "a wood" gave him relief. After all, it was *his* wood, and nothing very untoward could happen to a man in his own wood, however dark it might get; he could not be more than a mile and a half at the outside from his dining-room! He looked at his watch, whose hands he could just see—nearly half-past seven! The sleet had become

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snow, but it hardly fell on him, so thick was the timber just here. But he had no overcoat, and suddenly he felt that first sickening little drop in his chest which presages alarm. Nobody knew he was in this damned wood! And in a quarter of an hour it would be black as your hat! He *must* get on and out! The trees among which he was stumbling produced quite a sick feeling now in one who hitherto had never taken trees seriously.

What monstrous growths they were! The thought that seeds, tiny seeds or saplings, planted by his ancestors, could attain huge impending and imprisoning bulk—ghostly great growths mounting up to heaven and shutting off this world—exasperated and unnerved him. He began to run, caught his foot in a root and fell flat on his face. The cursed trees—they seemed to have a down on him! Rubbing elbows and forehead with his snow-wetted hands, he leaned against a trunk to get his breath and summon the sense of direction to his brain. Once as a young man he had been "bushed" at night in Vancouver Island; quite a scary business! But he had come out all right, though his camp had been the only civilized spot within a radius of twenty miles. And here he was, on his own estate, within a mile or two of home, getting into a funk. It was childish! And he laughed. The wind answered, sighing and threshing in the tree-tops. There must be a regular blizzard blowing now, and, to judge by the cold, from the north—but whether northeast or northwest was the question. Besides, how keep definite direction without a compass in the dark?

THE timber, too, with its trunks, diverted the wind into keen, directionless drafts. He looked up, but could make nothing of the two or three stars that he could see. It was a mess! And he lighted a second cigar with some difficulty, for he had begun to shiver. The wind in this blasted wood cut through his Norfolk jacket and crawled about his body, which had become hot from his exertions, and now felt clammy and half-frozen. This would mean pneumonia, if he didn't look out! And, half feeling his way from trunk to trunk, he started on again, but for all he could tell he might be going round in a circle, might even be crossing rides without realizing, and again that sickening drop occurred in his chest. He stood still and shouted. He had the feeling of shouting into walls of timber, dark and heavy, which threw the sound back at him.

"Curse you!" he thought. "I wish I'd sold you six months ago!" The wind fleered and mowed in the tree-tops; and he started off again at a run in that dark wilderness; till, hitting his head against a low branch, he fell stunned. He lay several minutes unconscious, came to himself deadly cold, and struggled up on to his feet.

"By Jove!" he thought, with a sort of stammer in his brain, "this is a bad business! I may be out here all night!" For an unimaginative man, it was extraordinary what vivid images he had just then. He saw the face of the Government official who had bought his timber, and the slight grimace with which he had agreed to the price. He saw his butler, after the gong had gone, standing like a stuck pig by the sideboard, waiting for him to come down. What would they do when he didn't come? Would they have the sense to imagine that he might have lost his way in the coverts, and take lanterns and search for him? Far more likely they would think he had walked over to "Greenlands" or "Berrymoor," and stayed there to dinner. And suddenly he saw himself slowly freezing out here, in the snowy night, among this cursed timber. With a vigorous shake, he butted again into the darkness among the tree-trunks. He was angry now—with himself, with the night, with the trees; so angry that he actually let out with his fist at a trunk against which he had stumbled, and scored his knuckles. It was humiliating; and Sir Arthur Hirries was not accustomed to humiliation. In anybody else's wood—yes; but to be lost like this in one's own coverts! Well, if he had to walk all night, he would get out! And he plunged on doggedly in the darkness.

He was fighting with his timber now, as if the thing were alive and each tree an enemy. In the interminable stumbling exertion of that groping progress his angry mood gave place to half-comatose philosophy. Trees! His great-great-grandfather had planted them! His own was the fifth man's life, but the trees were almost as young as ever; they made nothing of a man's life! He sniggered: and a man made nothing of theirs! Did they know they were going to be cut down? All the better if they did, and were sweating in their shoes. He pinched himself—his thoughts were becoming so queer! He remembered that once, when his liver was out of order, trees had seemed to him like solid, tall diseases—bulbous, scarred, cavernous, witch-armed, fungoid emanations of the earth. Well, so they were! And he was among them, on a snowy pitch-black night, engaged in this death-struggle!

The occurrence of the word death in his thoughts brought him up all standing. Why couldn't he concentrate his mind on getting out; why was he mooning about the life and nature of trees instead of trying to remember the conformation of his coverts, so as to rekindle in himself some sense of general direction? He struck a number of matches, to get a sight of his watch again. Great heaven! He had been walking nearly two hours since he last looked at it; and in what direction?

They said a man in a fog went round and round because of some kink in his brain!

HE BEGAN now to feel the trees, searching for a hollow trunk. A hollow would be some protection from the cold—his first conscious confession of exhaustion. He was not in training, and he was sixty-five. The thought, "I can't keep this up much longer," caused a second explosion of sullen anger. Damnation! Here he was—for all he could tell—standing where he had sat perhaps a dozen times on his spread shooting-stick; watching sunlight on bare twigs, or the nose of his spaniel twitching beside him, listening to the tap of the beaters' sticks, and the shrill, drawn-out: "Mar-r-k! Cock over!"

Would they let the dogs out, to pick up his tracks? No! Ten to one they would assume he was staying the night at the Summertons,' or at Lady Mary's, as he had done before now, after dining there. And suddenly his strained heart leaped. He had struck a ride again! His mind slipped back into place like an elastic let-go, relaxed, quivering gratefully. He had only to follow this ride, and somewhere, somehow, he would come out. And be hanged if he would let them know what a fool he had made of himself! Right or left—which way? He turned so that the flying snow came on his back, hurrying forward between the denser darkness on either hand, where the timber stood in walls, moving his arms across and across his body, as if dragging a concertina to full stretch, to make sure that he was keeping in the patch.

He went what seemed an interminable way like this, till he was brought up all standing by trees, and could find no outlet, no continuation. Turning in his tracks, with the snow in his face now, he retraced his steps till once more he was brought up short by trees. He stood panting. It was ghastly—ghastly! And in a panic he dived this way and that to find the bend, the turning, the way on. The sleet stung his eyes, the wind fleered and whistled, the boughs sloughed and moaned. He struck matches, trying to shade them with his cold, wet hands, but one by one they went out, and still he found no turning. The ride must have a blind alley at either end; the turning must be down the side somewhere! Hope revived in him. Never say die!

HE BEGAN a second retracing of his steps, feeling the trunks along one side, to find a gap. His breath came with difficulty. What would old Brodley say if he could see him, soaked, sweating, frozen, tired to death, stumbling along in the darkness among this cursed timber—old Brodley who had told him his heart was in poor case! A gap? Ah! No trunks—a ride! He turned, felt a sharp pain in his knee and pitched forward. He could not rise—the knee dislocated six years ago was out again. Sir Arthur Hirries clenched his teeth. Nothing more could happen to him! But after a minute—blank and bitter—he began to crawl along the new ride. Oddly he felt less discouraged and alarmed on hands and knee—for he could use but one. It was a relief to have his eye fixed on the ground, not peering at the tree-trunks; or perhaps there was less strain for the moment on his heart. He crawled, stopping every minute or so to renew his strength. He crawled mechanically, waiting for his heart, his knee, his lungs to stop him.

The earth was snowed over, and he could feel its cold wetness as he scraped along. Good tracks to follow, if anybody struck them! But in this dark forest—! In one of his halts, drying his hands as best he could, he struck a match, and sheltering it desperately, fumbled out his watch. Past ten o'clock! He wound the watch, and put it back against his heart. If only he could wind his heart! And squatting there he counted his matches—four! "Well," he thought grimly, "I won't light them to show me my blasted trees. I've got a cigar left; I'll keep them for that." And he crawled on again. He must keep going while he could!

He crawled till his heart and lungs and knee struck work; and, leaning his back against a tree, sat huddled together, so exhausted that he felt nothing save a sort of bitter heartache. He even dropped asleep, waking with a shudder, dragged from a dream armchair at the club into this cold, wet darkness and the blizzard moaning in the trees. He tried to crawl again, but could not, and for some minutes

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He was fighting with his timber now, as if the thing were alive and each tree an enemy.

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stayed motionless, hugging his body with his arms. "Well," he thought dimly, "I *have* done it!" His mind was in such lethargy that he could not even pity himself. Then he remembered his cigar. He got it out, bit the end off, and began with infinite precautions to prepare for lighting it.

The first two matches went out. The third burned, and the cigar drew. He had one match left, in case he dozed and let the thing go out. Looking up through the blackness he could see a star. He fixed his eyes on it, and leaning against the trunk, drew the smoke down into his lungs. With his arms crossed tightly on his breast he smoked very slowly. When it was finished—what? Cold, and the wind in the trees until the morning! Half-way through the cigar, he dozed off, slept a long time, and woke up so cold that he could barely summon vitality enough to strike his last match. By some miracle it burned, and he got his cigar to draw again. This time he smoked it nearly to its end, without mentality, almost without feeling, except the physical sense of bitter cold. Once with a sudden clearing of the brain, he thought faintly: "Thank God, I sold the —— trees, and they'll all come down!" The thought drifted away in frozen incoherence, drifted out like his cigar smoke into the sleet; and with a faint grin on his lips he dozed off again. . . .

An underkeeper found him at ten o'clock next morning, blue from cold, under a tall elm-tree, within a mile of his bed, one leg stretched out, the other hunched up toward his chest, with its foot dug into the undergrowth for warmth, his head huddled into the collar of his coat, his arms crossed on his breast. They said he must have been dead at least six hours. Along one side snow had drifted against him; but the trunk had saved his back and other side. Above him, the spindly top boughs of that tall tree were covered with green-gold clusters of tiny crinkled elm flowers, against a deep-blue sky—gay as a young song of perfect praise. The wind had dropped, and after the cold of the night the birds were singing their clearest in the sunshine.

They did not cut down the elm-tree under which they found his body, with the rest of the sold timber, but put a little iron fence round it and a little tablet on its trunk.

The Crow's Nest

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

THE crow's nest is not built to please the wren.
And Luke's rough house stood high upon a hill
Where pines in distance were like bristling hairs
Upon a giant's head grown nearly bald.
It was not liked by Sarah in her house
So small and trim near birches where the lands
Sloped to the valley. When she saw the hill
Each day she saw Luke's house and frowned at it
And said, "It's like a crow's nest," to herself. . . .
These two were married there two years before
And parted—and were stubborn as the hills.

It is a lonely land among the hills—
The crows flew over and the circling hawks
And stirred the place as unexpected crowds
May rouse a country store . . . Luke lived alone
With his great dog, because his folks had lived
In that same place before him, tilled the land
And took what grew. And Sarah lived alone
In her prim house because her folks had lived
In it before her. . . . Then one windy night,
For all her stubborn pride, the loneliness
Was more than she could bear. She would not go
To Luke and ask forgiveness, would not leave
Her house for his without a good excuse.
So desperate was her love, so much in need,
She thought, "I'll burn this place. No other's near. . . .
He can not turn me out into the hills."
And so she fired the house she loved—and Luke
Came down to help her fight the flames. No house
But his was near, and so, at last, they went
Into the crow's nest. Luke pushed back a door
And went ahead of her. He kicked aside
A pile of grass and rags that he had placed
Along a wall, and Sarah asked, "What s that?"
He growled, "A place I meant the dog to sleep."
And Sarah laughed, "That grass burns fine. I *know*."
And Luke, though shame-faced, laughed with her at last,
Although she said, "We might have had the sense
To keep the better house—since one's enough!"

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The Trencher

By David Churchill

A swift, dramatic story of Alaska. A story of a woman's courage and loyalty and quick wit pitted against treachery and death in the snow-wrapped gold hills of the North. Told by one who knows from life both the people and the place.

THE men bunched in the door beyond the direct light of the lamp were a motley and diverse crew, but of one mind in the silent, almost breathless attention turned upon Jane. It was not her coat and leggings of mottled deerskin, nor even her vivid face under the turned-back fur hood, which had warmed her hair to the dark, shining smoothness of a seal's, nor was it her keen, interested eyes which held them. It was the thought of what she had dared in order to join her husband here in the arctic mining-camp; of the long lonely trip from Seattle—the danger of being ice-bound; the hardihood—the utter foolishness of it!

Not one of them, from the Youngster with moist, adolescent eyes to the great jungle beast with hair clear to his cheek-bones could understand it, unless perhaps old Reuben, the foreman. Of that royal, unreckoning passion of tenderness and protection which had brought Jane Burchard north in the teeth of winter they had no experience, scarcely a belief till now. They were of the lonely herd unable to win the love of woman, forever trying to buy the semblance of it. Though they could not understand, yet they could feel its reality, and the proof of it was before their eyes in the person of Jane.

They had just helped her from the deck of the *Taku*, with planks shoved out upon the ice right to the steamer's edge and with haste none too swift. For the cold glazed the very wake of the steamer, so that she had to break her way out again with bruised nose and groaning engines and a narrow chance of beating the polar pack down through Bering Straits to her winter berth at Port Clarence.

The men were a queer lot, Jane thought, especially the hairy one—these men acquired in the year of her absence; rather awful to meet face to face three times a day, but about what you might expect, her experience taught her, of men working for wages in the North. Her imagination stretched ahead through the long arctic winter already closing down; spanned the hundreds of miles of icy desolation between their camp and the nearest Eskimo encampment on the straits. She looked about the small, snug cabin and up at her husband where he stood waiting for her to speak, a troubled question at the back of his eyes. It seemed to her incredible good fortune to be there; to have beaten the closing down of the polar pack!

She smiled on the men. "Thank you all for helping me ashore so deftly," she said, her mellow English voice and crisp consonants falling strangely, confusingly sweet on ears unused to the voice of any woman.

No one answered directly; it was less than twenty minutes since the *Taku's* first warning siren, and they could not adjust themselves to her presence.

"She'll na' mak Port Clarence before the pack ketches 'er," the hairy one advanced unexpectedly.

Jane turned on him with keen interest. It was broad Cornish he spoke, broad as the meadows of Stockley. He met her keenness with the inscrutable half-regard which she had found just as characteristic of the tenants on her father's place.

Old Reuben cleared his throat; as foreman, the courtesies of the camp were his. "How did you leave the twins, ma'am?" he asked with something very near a smile.

Her answer was bright, cool and hearty and she did not look at her husband: "Thank you, Reuben—fine! And indifferent to all but themselves, as healthy babies ought to be at eight months. In fact, about as stolid, intelligent and leafy as cabbages of the same age!"

THIS so clearly exceeded Reuben's question that it embarrassed him, but Jane continued reminiscently:

"The last I saw of them they were plastering each other with porridge. When I tried to kiss them good-by they rapped me in the face with their spoons."

Reuben's face resembled nothing so much as that of a mule; his old fur parka was disreputable, but he was a courtier at heart. He knew that he had become a channel of information intended for another's ear. Though the deepening of his grave smile seemed to draw his chin inward to a deprecating angle, he managed to convey to the other men, seven in all—that it was time to leave Mr. and Mrs. Burchard to themselves.

"Ma'am," he said, closing the interview like a diplomat, "your bein' unexpected ain't made you a mite less welcome than the first meadowlark in the spring. I know 'm speakin' for the lot of us."

Jane always had liked and trusted Reuben Larned. She followed him to the door with a personal question as to his health, a word of appreciation for the year he had kept things going while she had been outside, in Seattle. "busy with the twins."

When at last she had closed the door, she turned and faced her husband. She hoped he would speak first, reproach her, call her an unnatural mother, give her a chance to explain why, after their complete agreement—after she had let him go north without her—after everything was settled for the winter, she had deserted those two blessed babies.

He compelled her by his silence. His eyes were severely questioning for all their tenderness; their deep gladness he could not hide. She was vitally aware, as though seeing it for the first time, of his fair, rugged strength, of the sensitively curved upper lip, the whole man indelibly stamped with idealism, patience, accomplishment; yes, and Heaven's last, best gift—humor! She had one ecstatic moment of certainty that at least one of the twins was like him and the other cunningly, beautifully modified from her own dark type by such splendid paternity. Then he spoke.

"Well?"

"Well."

Her head on one side, eyes like boreal stars in the delicate, oval face, cheeks a stinging red. Jane defied him, suddenly nearer tears than she cared to admit.

His first word, however, was a defense of her: "Of course there is Aunt Marcia."

She swallowed, winking back those damnable tears—talking against time. "After you left, George Burchard, I could neither eat nor sleep. I worried Aunt Marcia into a fidget! I talked about your food, your exercise and your flannels till she turned on me. 'Why don't you go after him? You'll likely catch him up somewhere between here and the North Pole!' It was too much! I asked her if she didn't think I had any natural feeling for my children, and she said she didn't see where I got it if I had! Dear Aunt Marcia! She said she was capable of caring for any Stockley babies ever born; that she had minded us when mother went traipsing all over the world after dad while he fought Hindus, Hottentots, and what not! Dear, dear Aunt Marcia!"

GEORGE BURCHARD had her hands now. She hurried on.

"Then I—waked up one morning and forgot you were gone. I called out to you to come with me down the woods path and watch the sun rise over the mountain, and when I remembered—and how long it would be before I should see you again, I nearly died! I ran to the end of the woods path, and there it was, the way we saw it all last year together, only—it wasn't the same. I was crying so I couldn't see it. And instead I seemed to see the beach up here, the endless ice, the cabin, and the shed and bunk-house, and—something was wrong, I couldn't tell what, only that you needed me terribly. It was frightfully real, and I knelt down with my face turned this way and I told—God—I would come. And right away I began to feel better, and I just tore into the house and waked Aunt Marcia and told her. She was wonderful—a perfect brick about it."

Still he held her hands and looked down at her. "Where are they now?" he asked.

"George," she besought him to understand, "there was just one place on earth for them—home. They are there by this time."

"England?" he demanded with incredulous amazement. "You sent them clean home to England, Jane?"

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A huge ghostly shape in the arctic twilight, with small burning eyes and a breath like a volcano.

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Jane nodded; she was at her last ditch.

George Burchard turned away and back to her. He groaned and choked on it. "We shall not know till summer— "He checked himself. "The whole thickness of the globe is between us."

Jane threw her arms about him in a pitiful, protecting embrace. If he could just think of Aunt Marcia as she did—a regular Rock of Gibraltar! She called on Heaven for comfort for him. Her voice was creditably steady, if muffled, when she said:

"I'd be willing to bet you anything you like that right this minute dad is down on the carpet in the drawing-room where we never were allowed, bullying with them while Aunt Marcia tells all about how I packed and followed you in three days."

George laid his hand over her lips; he drew her into his arms. For a long moment they stood in a silent embrace. She understood, and at last she kissed him, a yearning, remorseful little kiss. It was a promise not to speak of the twins again. It was a worshipful admission that she had somehow fallen short of his ideal of her. Yet, as though denying this, he held her still closer—covered her face with eager, tender kisses.

"You are—glad!" she murmured.

"Of course," he whispered. "You plucky little mortal—my wee game plover!"

YET Jane wondered as she went about her work whether she really loved the twins as much as he did, whether she was an unnatural mother—and ended with an overmastering gladness that she had come. What George thought of her was not half as important as his need of her. Presently she was singing about the lamplit cabin. The sound drew him from the shed where they were firing the paystreak. They stood facing each other, electric, radiant; resisting each other.

"George," she put her conundrum, "what mess is worse than a man makes housekeeping alone?"

She held him at arms' length while he considered it, her fingers tingling in his. It was difficult to think—better just to feel.

"Seven men housekeeping alone," he ventured.

"Right the first guess," she laughed, silenced abruptly by the sudden fervor of his caress. He lifted her off her feet and sat down with her in his arms, against his shoulder, held fast.

"He is glad," she thought jubilantly.

"Let this be a lesson to you, George Burchard," she murmured, rubbing her cheek against his rough mackinaw; "a camp is demoralized and demoralizing without a woman. You'll have to hammer out all the tin plates before they will hold gravy!"

Their joined laughter turned suddenly into a tremulous kiss that brought tears.

"Oh, George—I just had to come——"

"Hush!" he commanded with fierce tenderness. "Of course you had to."

He stood up, setting her abruptly on her feet. She brushed her eyes with the back of her hands.

"I wonder what they *did* to all the dishes, anyhow?" she persisted. "They must have fought with them. As for the big platter I used for serving beans and everything, I can't find a splinter of it."

George released her—pushed her away and strode off to his work. She followed him to the door and stood watching him, with his men, silhouetted against the full fire smoldering down in the paystreak.

It was three and dark already. The blue-black velvet sky, the marvelous clear stars, and the full glow in the north where the aurora slept touched her heart. She whispered to the unknown Power above and around her:

"I am here—God," and went with deep content about her homely tasks.

The bread-box had disclosed a handful of messy, sourdough bannocks. Jane shook down the stove, put more coal on the fire and rolled up her fur sleeves. From behind the stove on a shelf supported by pegs driven into the log wall, a tomato-can full of the odorous sour ferment assailed her, confirmed her, justified her. Whoever had been doing the cooking was too lazy to bake bread, she decided as she got out her bread-board.

It had to be scoured, as did the bread-pans, what she could find of them. Some were full of bacon fat. Others had been used for fish oil or heavy grease for tallowing boots. In her search for pans she came on a pile of reeking woolens which she recognized as George's reserve suits. Under the bunk a pair of blankets, stiffened and partly burnt, told of cigaret ash, bed clothes afire, doused and thrown out to freeze.

George would have straightened up, of course, if he had expected her. This merely showed how he let himself down when she was away from him! Far from discouraging her, it exhilarated. George really needed her. With swift precision she overhauled the two bunks, gathered soiled linen, hung up the dog harness, scoured the table and blackened the stove. After that she washed the bunk and window curtains, the towels and flannels, and hung the stained things out to freeze in the cold.

II

DINNER of baked salmon and rice with hot biscuit was an incident only in the labors of Jane that first day, though it marked an epoch with the men. They filed in with sleek, self-conscious heads and ate in silent tribute to the cooking.

"There is something so childlike about them," Jane said to her husband as they two lingered alone over their tea. "Did you notice the big Cornishman with the curly hair?"

"Willum," he assented. "Whittlin' Willum."

"His stare is not wholly grateful," she observed thoughtfully. "It was more curious, even a little like surprised amusement tinctured with a contempt—the attitude of his class for women in general."

Burchard stirred uneasily, moved over on the bench and put his arm around her. She continued in playful defiance.

"I know you don't like the word 'class,' George Burchard, but until you find me a better word how can I say what I mean?"

George avoided the issue. "What about Willum?"

"He is so very much the Cornish peasant. He might have been born in the shadow of Stockley Towers. He is as blunt, as truculent as some of father's tenants!"

George put his hands over her ears, turned up her face to his and looked her in the eye. "How feudal my Honorable Jane is!"

Jane pulled his hands down. "The washing out on the line doesn't look exactly feudal to me," she declared.

"My hands feel very wrinkled and democratic!"

He laid them thoughtfully against his lips.

She withdrew them and held them up for inspection. "Admit it!"

He smiled at her and asked gently: "Why must we argue this over and over, dear? You are here by choice not necessity. It is your prerogative to do for love all these things which make us so grateful and happy. If a servant did it for hire you would look down on her, as you do on these men who are wage-earners. You really are feudal, you know!"

"And if I am how can I help but be?" she demanded. "I deny that wages have anything to do with it—it's breeding. Even a well-sired horse is conscious of his mettle, which is the result of his carefully selective breeding! Why should a human being be less so?"

"I suppose you forgot all about that when you married me?" he accused her, rubbing his cheek against hers.

Jane almost threw the magnificent twins in his face before she recollected her silent compact not to mention them.

"George Burchard!" she cried, freeing herself, suddenly feminine and illogical; hurt a little too, and vexed with him for having the best of her for the moment, "George Burchard, you know perfectly well that isn't so!" She rallied her logic: "Those very qualities which made my father choose you to manage this Alaska Company and made me choose you for my own husband are proof that some men are born to better things than others. I'll wager anything you like that Willum had every bit the chance to get on that you did, only he hadn't the—*stuff* in him! You were born better, even if it was in a cottage. There is no 'Free and Equal' birth!"

"There is not," he answered her gravely, "but because there ought to be, some day there will be." He stood up. "Just a little perspective, dear—a bird's-eye on the progress of the human race from the beginning as we know it, till now. Can't you see that the sacrifice of the masses to individual well-being is gradually giving way——"

"To the sacrifice of the individual to the well-being of the masses—yes, I can see that as plain as the nose on my face, George Burchard," she flamed.

SOMETHING in him burned even fiercer. "And you cannot see that for sheer necessity to preserve itself, the human race, churning—churning, always from the bottom—up, must right the inequalities of birth, of opportunity——"

He dazzled her. Because there ought to be there would be! What impractical idealism! She stood and adored him openly. Suppose he talked this way to the men! It was a dangerous creed, but how good he was—how fine! Suppose she hadn't had the courage to follow him!

"It is the obligation, the privilege of the more favored to give the means, the energy, even life itself to the welfare of the race," he contended. "It's '*Noblesse oblige*' little Jane—little Honorable Jane!"

Jane took hold of him, wonder, doubt,

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fear, pride struggling with a deep fundamental joy of possession. Persistently and without logic she paid homage to this man of her heart who held such unsound views. She felt like a mother to him. Come what would of it, she would share with him so long as the breath of life was left in her!

III

JANE'S serenity flooded the little cabin. George came in on every possible pretext just to bask in it. The men thawed out little by little, and as the depression of winter grew they began to linger after the evening meal. Jane had brought games of chance and skill. The Youngster had a soft tenor and knew a score of the sentimental songs exiled men love best. Willum contributed a chantey or two. He would drop his whittling and sing when urged.

But argument was the breath of his nostrils. Jane believed he studied nights on ways to bait George Burchard's kindly soul, always patiently ready to answer him. The subjects ranged from fertilizers to religion, but his favorite contentions were upon the rights of labor, the ancient abuses —John Bull's shortcomings.

"John Bull," George contended, "is yourself, myself — the profiteer and the proletarian, we're all responsible — all to blame." But Willum, stubbornly unconvinced, visioning John Bull as the personal overlord, would conclude darkly:

"Us'll tak' un by the horns one of these days."

Jane's evenings alone with her husband grew fewer and fewer till she protested:

"We have almost no time together any more—why can't the men sit in their own bunk-house after dinner?"

"The bunk-house isn't half as warm and comfortable," he explained.

"Are we short of coal, or what?"

"We are rather short," he admitted; "we lost our transport coming up."

"George!"

"A bad storm off Unimak. I bought up everything I could get at Dutch Harbor and in Nome—coal at seventy-five—and Reuben had the men cutting a sort of peat during the summer. It does fairly well mixed with coal—there's no cause for worry, dear. But with this fire in our cabin and the one I'm keeping in the working vein, it seems best to let the bunk-house fire burn as low as we can."

"I see," Jane agreed; "the men really must sit here in our cabin evenings."

"Do you mind too much?"

She reassured him: "We'll just take our walks then. They will be freer to smoke and talk."

George assented, but with reservation. She could see no reason why their private life should be given wholly to the men, so she did not press the matter.

Those long tramps on snow-shoes out over the polar pack or up on the level tundra were never to be forgotten. With the living light of the aurora, and each other, and all the world beside blotted from thought, they skimmed the unmeasured miles like petrels. Once only did they see a living being. It was a white bear, a huge ghostly shape in the arctic twilight, with small burning eyes and a breath like a volcano. They rounded a piled ice floe and came on Bruin suddenly, up on his hind legs, towering over them, terror-stricken for the moment in which they stared breathless at the apparition of life. Then he dropped on all fours and galloped clumsily away into the safety of the dusk.

Jane was for getting the men and hunting him down. "What a trophy to take home to dad!"

"He may not stop running till he hits the North Pole," George laughed, yet it was he who organized the hunt. He welcomed the diversion. "Things ferment in a small camp like this," he told his wife, hesitated, and said no more.

IV

BRUIN measured thirteen feet from his nose to the base of his spine. Hung from the gable of the cabin, his forefeet dragged. Every claw was perfect, and the pelt glittered in every ivory-tinted hair. A magnificent trophy! The men were exultant, thoroughly tired and good-natured. It meant fresh meat for weeks to come to the exiles, and marked the beginning of the Christmas holidays as nothing else could have done.

Incidentally it disclosed the fact that there was but one rifle in camp, the Youngster's. He had a limited number of cartridges—boy treasures. Jane, who thought of danger in terms of ammunition, dismissed anxiety from her mind, and turned to her Christmas preparations.

"Tin plates are all right for everything but Yuletide," she observed, the week before Christmas, as she slipped them into the pan of melting snow-water hissing and crackling on the red top of the stove.

Willum looked up at her from between his eyebrows and his beard, knife posed above his whittling.

"Mayhap you'd like a trencher for the b'ar's head, m'lady," he suggested.

The others laughed.

"You take the words out of my mouth, Willum," she returned lightly, stooping to open the oven door upon an enormous pan of pork and beans bubbling in a rich, brown gravy.

"You shall have it," he promised, taking up his whittling, as she closed the oven.

"And the holly and an apple to put between the bear's teeth?" she laughed.

" 'Twill be moss and a pratie, I'm afeard," he said; "t'was the trencher I promised; that I'll mak' good."

He took a small can from his pocket, and dipping his fingers into its contents began to smear the disk he had been whittling. She had not noticed before that it was an oval, carefully hollowed and carved about the edge.

"Why, Willum—what a beauty!" she cried, as the oil and grime on his hands began to bring out the rude pattern of the carving.

" 'Tis the scene of my childhood," he said with a tinge of sarcastic sentimentality. " 'Tis where I was hided for many a wee crime agen' the rich and powerfu'."

He rose and put it in her hands. "For Yuletide and the b'ar's head this day week. " 'Twill bear washin'—the grime of toil's upon it."

The men were as curiously intent as they had been the first night of her coming. She thought of it after she had thanked him and they had filed out. What a lot of children they were, with men's passions and men's strength! For a moment and with the sense that she had lost touch with them since her evenings with George had taken her afield, she feared them. They had grown secretive. Willum was dominating them. She dismissed it as nonsense —her imagination—a silly premonition of nerves. The "aurora gloria borealis" nights with George should not be given up without a sufficient reason!

She examined the trencher Willum had laid in her hands. Stockley Towers—the ruin of the abbey—the bridge down by the old mill and all between thatched cottages—lanes—meadow, peasants. Rude as it was, there was no mistaking his intention in the carving of the border. Her mind traveled back to her childhood. From which of those boys was this great jungle-beast grown? Old Gregory had a son who poached—had been punished and had run away. Yet the instinct which had prompted Willum to make the trencher seemed kindly!

"George," she began as he entered. When she saw his face she changed her mind, went to him quickly and put her arms about him. "What is it, dear?"

"We're close on a pocket in the gravel. It is richer than I ever expected to see."

"And?"

"I don't dare leave the men with just Reuben."

"I have been expecting it. Is there anything else?"

He didn't notice the tinge of bitterness in her voice.

"You are doing so much for the men already that I hate to ask another thing of you, but——"

"But if I could amuse those pets of yours—sing or dance——"

"Jane!"

She was almost breathless with remorse: "I've a plan ready, dear—reading-games. I was only joking. We'll begin this very evening."

HE DREW her into the light and frowned intently at her.

"Willum whittles—and grumbles," he said.

"He is a trouble-stick."

"That is true. It is the fault of his quality. He is a wanderer—and adventurer—an individual; in short a personality, now warped and twisted, that would have made something worth while if he had been born —say as your brother."

"My brother," cried the Honorable Jane, and again, "my brother!"

George was thinking; he was argumentative and absent-minded. "Little Jane, you had four grandparents, eight great-grandparents; likewise sixteen great, great grandparents and thirty-two great, great, great——"

"I know the rest," Jane interrupted him, willing either to laugh or cry. "You were enunciating it at a social clinic the night dad introduced us! Less than thirty or maybe twenty generations ago my ancestors were more than twice the population of England. Ergo: either Willum had no ancestors at that time or had—mine!"

George's deep laugh rewarded her. He drew a gently impudent hand across her face in a way that especially endeared him to her for some inexplicable reason. Perhaps—because he always followed it by an all-embracing hug.

"I don't ask you to call him cousin, but I do ask you to remember that with a little different birth or circumstance he might have been—well, anything. He is a born leader. I know I'm repeating myself, but here he is working for wages three hundred

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"Willum," she said sharply, her eyes blazing upon him, "I want your gun. Lay it on the trencher there. Then tell the others to do the same with theirs."

miles north of the arctic circle, in a corporation paystreak much too rich."

"And he knows you sympathize with him," Jane accused.

"Not from any word of mine, though I tell you frankly that both by principle and as a matter of business I should make it cooperative. I'll go farther: he should *participate*—every one should participate to the fullest, if it were mine, or if I had any authority over it." The flame burned up in him.

"HELL'S Bells! Why do we call ourselves pretty names—pose as overlords? It's loot—it's all loot! We're despoiling the old earth—we're out for all we can get, every one of us—I, your father, Willum. We're fired with the same passion of acquisition, the same greed of gain. Just that I happen to prime the hole with the first gold does not in any wise differentiate me. We pose—we lie to ourselves, we fight for our 'rights,' we quarrel and kill each other, and then, stripped of every sham, every possession, we go out as we came into life! Sane? No one is sane—Greedy? All are blind with greed."

"George!" She covered his lips with her two hands.

In the door stood the Youngster, eyes and mouth sagging with wonder at what he saw; a man and woman in heated argument, yet a close embrace.

"What is it?" George asked him quietly.

"Reuben says will you come, sir."

"Coming," he answered evenly.

"Call them to dinner as soon as you can," he whispered in her ear, "and keep them. Come out between times if you like—just for a minute."

He passed the Youngster in the doorway, Jane was close behind.

"Dinner is served," she called merrily into the night. "Prime ribs and Bruin, dessicated potatoes and evaporated cabbage, with plum pudding *à la—à la——*"

No name for the bread pudding now steaming would come to her frenzied need until the flickering light in the north shot suddenly to the zenith.

"Plum pudding *à l'aurore!*" she cried to the men sweating below the edge of the pit.

They looked up at her dumbly.

"Run along to your dinner, boys," Reuben told them. "The boss and I will take this fall, and eat afterward, if the missus don't mind."

"Of course not," she assured him with false cheer. The air was charged with some imminent catastrophe.

The dinner was silent and sinister to Jane. Once when the Youngster asked for salt, there was a snarl of jangling nerves from the men. She prepared the dessert fully so that she might serve them and steal a minute to go outside. She reached the edge of the pit just as the bank of gravel above the fire caved in upon it. She saw Reuben and her husband rush forward with a candle and examine the newly exposed surfaces. Reuben mouthed a startled oath and looked about and up at her.

"Jane," her husband cried below his breath, "go back and hold them—till I come! It's rotten with gold!"

"She can not hold 'em," Reuben protested. "You'd best go back with her, sit down and eat summat and tell 'em quiet like about it. Meantime I'll pick up the worst of the nuggets."

Without argument, George Burchard took the advice of the older man. While Jane served a second helping of the pudding *à l'aurore*, he ate his slice of Bruin and talked calmly of the pocket of extraordinary richness just disclosed in the paystreak. When Willum slipped out he let him go, and a second man. But the third who rose with the intention of following, found himself blocked in going out through the door. Not only that, he had to wait while Burchard gave orders for the new night and day shift, asked Jane if it would be possible to serve a hot meal at midnight, and then invited them all to come and see the pocket.

THEY were barely gone before the Youngster reappeared, breathless and fearful, to say that Reuben had gone to his bunk and would she please come to him there. Full of undefined anxiety she hurried to the bunk-house. He had stumbled and fallen onto the fire, he told her, as though embarrassed by his clumsiness. He would have come into the cabin to let her dress his burn but he had turned kind

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of faint, he said. He begged her earnestly not to mention it to the others.

"Reuben—what is the danger—what will they do—what could they do?" she demanded as she bandaged his arm.

Reuben turned the whole situation over in his mind, she saw, trying to decide how much to say to her.

"They're just about crazy," he admitted, finally. "Gold-bug-loco with the sight of such a rich placer. They ain't got anything to think about but that—no saloon, no nothing. Nothing but the same grind day by day."

"But last year—other years?"

"I never see anything like this strike in my life," he said. "Do you know, Mrs. George, we been burning seventy-five dollar coal in it all winter and a good bargain, too?"

"But Reuben," she demanded desperately, "what can I do about it—what is the danger—tell me how I can watch against it."

His eyes were closed; he was faint again, but he pulled himself together.

"If I should be laid up for long—mebbe not get well, watch out for Willum. He's a natural sorehead, and when they go loco after gold there ain't much they'll stop at. There's two ways besides guns of getting rid of folks up here; cold and heat. If George Burchard refuses to divvy up with them, they're liable to hold out on the coal, or to fire the cabin. But they won't do neither till just before time fer the *Taku* to get back."

"But if they—killed us," she forced herself to ask, "how could they get away from here with the gold? Captain Amos knows us—he would take them prisoners—have them hung."

"Amos is old—he ain't likely to call again. It'll be a new captain aboard the *Taku* when she comes in June. They got it all figured out a'ready, excuses and all. I heard 'em one night in the bunk-house, and that devil Willum, though he got up the plan, is the one that's stickin' at the killin'. He figures your husband'll give in—" He groaned and sobbed like an old man.

"Reuben!" she cried, "you're hurt!"

"His boot took me in the left side below the ribs," he whispered.

"Willum's?" she demanded.

"No, the black one—Hunkie, I guess. It's between him and Willum."

Now he fainted outright, and she ran for restoratives. Swiftly she worked over him, thinking. When she had him fairly comfortable she joined the men around the pit.

"Let's celebrate," she cried gaily, whipping out her automatic. "Hold up your candle, George."

FIVE times running she nicked the flame at twenty yards before she missed; her father's girl had shame else. Half a dozen revolvers came out, but her score held. She watched Willum and Willum watched her. She could not fathom his mind, but at least she had uncovered the guns.

From that day she laid fresh siege to their interest and their appetites. The Christmas "b'ar's head," with moss and a pratie between its teeth, was flanked by every good thing in her supply boxes. There was real plum pudding with burning Jamaica rum and a gay evening that left Jane very tired. The good-will, she told herself, was more cooked up than the dinner.

George took Willum, the "Hunkie" and the Youngster on the night shift with himself, yet he had to be up much of the day as well. The first of February came and went with brief sun at noon. The tension which had been hidden, came out into the open. George's orders were still obeyed, but with sullen silence or a muttered oath. Jane, who had given up all her evenings to their entertainment, now saw them come in to dinner in silence, eat and file out as they came. Or make talk with jarring laughter and jokes passed under their breaths. Sometimes she felt as though she were in an asylum; George she never saw alone, night or day. There were no more walks in the magic twilight of the aurora.

March passed; April came and went. As the snow drew northward through the weeks the light of Reuben's mind flickered and went out, and they buried him under the greening tundra. The pile of little bags of golddust and nuggets under George's bunk grew steadily. Jane felt them more unsafe than so much dynamite.

With the warmth of the sun, climbing day by day toward the zenith, the men grew more cheerful, but it was a sinister cheerfulness. They were sure of themselves, Jane thought. Since Reuben's death there were only two left to dispose of. George was visibly breaking with the strain and she was just a woman—the woman who fed them, easily disposed of when they were through needing her! There was despair in Jane's heart but no surrender.

And then one afternoon George fainted.

He had come in, changed his moccasins for boots, for it was melting outside, and had risen to go out again. Jane caught him as he swayed and when she had put him in his bunk and given him veronal she made her decision.

V

THE day was warm and beautiful. The snow, always light in the far North, had melted in the fervent sun which in the last week of May dips for a short two hours below the horizon. On one night the spring beauties had bloomed above the eternal frost. Purple primroses and creamy pepperroot sprayed the vivid green of the meadow-like tundras. The little cabin was sweet with familiar, wild odors, the table groaned with good things. Jane's brown head was bare, her eyes and cheeks were aflame with desperate courage when she called the men to dinner, for the ice pack had split off from the shore in the night; the passage was open.

Whatever the men intended they must put through now or it would be too late. If the passage was clear out around Barrow, it meant that the way was open to Port Clarence, for the troubled water of Bering Straits with the powerful draw of cold and heat is last to freeze and first to melt. The *Taku* was due any day now, the little *Taku* and safety for George, herself and the hateful gold.

Only once had any of them asked after "The Boss" since his faint the day before. Willum had demanded audience with him late in the evening and Jane had denied him. Afterward she had kept watch all night with her automatic cocked and her finger on the trigger. Why didn't they fire the cabin if they were going to? She had a certain contempt for their shillyshallying mixed with relief when the light brought reprieve. All day she had sung at her work in a fierce mood of defiance and daring.

George still slept the deep sleep of exhaustion that is almost a swoon. When he stirred she gave him veronal again. It seemed to her that she had become one need, one longing—one imperative instinct, to save her husband.

She knew that if the men demanded the gold he would refuse. It was not his—he was only its custodian, a paid worker for wages, like themselves. Whatever his principles, this was a matter of personal integrity. She knew him! And if he refused? Before it should come to that she must act. She went out to the pit to call the men to dinner. They had dropped the pretense of work; the pocket had been emptied, and all but the Youngster, set to watch the fire, came at her summons.

"Come, boy," she cried, "pile on the coal and leave it—no one will run off with it. We're celebrating."

He looked first to Willum and then to the Hunkie for permission.

"Come!" Jane was imperative.

He came.

JANE had managed somehow, out of dried vegetables and jerked meat, to prepare a score of Cornish pasties. She brought the filled trencher and set it before Willum.

"You will serve it," she said.

Willum took up the trencher awkwardly, avoiding her eyes as he knocked two of the pasties off on to his plate and passed it along, received the other empty plates and filled them likewise. He was sullenly obeying her, she noted, and prepared for her last move. Either she would succeed or she would precipitate the crisis that might cost the lives of both herself and her husband. Yes, and of a few others, she resolved; that should come first.

She listened for the deep, regular breathing of her husband behind the curtain of his bunk; the men were nearly finished with their dinner. Deliberately she closed the door and leaned against it. For all her slight physique there was a commanding dignity about her that arrested. Her hand was upon the little automatic inside her pocket. She saw that both Willum and the Hunkie knew it, yet she knew, with them, that they might easily overcome her—seven of them.

"Willum," she said sharply, her eyes blazing upon him, "I want your gun. Lay it on the trencher there. Then tell the others to do the same with theirs."

An almost imperceptible movement of the men caught her eye.

"I have you covered," she told them, steadily, "and you know I can shoot."

Willum opposed his silent, motionless bulk, the alertness of a lynx, to her silent watchfulness. Out of the hairy thatch his eyes met hers in a combat of will that held the others breathless. Only once in her life had Jane known such a struggle, above and beyond any physical power to mitigate or coerce. It was sheer power of the spirit that brought Willum to his feet at last, that compelled him to touch his rough forelock.

"M'lady," he said with husky intensity, his eyes on the trencher, "ye've no the right to fash me. Whut we demand is a faer division o' the loot. Such your own man has namit it. Fetch 'im out and we'll dicker with 'im—this is no woman's business!"

He glanced at the Hunkie whose dark,

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unkempt head was thrust out at him. Under the spur of it he hit the table with his fist.

"We be *cattle* to un!" he roared. "*Cattle!*" Again there was silence. "We dinna wish to haerm yerself," he added; "we want a faer division; ye can tell your man we're goin' to have a faer division."

"It isn't his to give, Willum," she said clearly.

"Ye'd scarce deny 'tis o'd Sir John's," he sneered, "and ye're his dochter."

"Very well then, as his daughter I say to you that you came up here of your own free will to work for the wage agreed upon," Jane stated. "Can't you see?" she broke out, passionately convincing. "A man's *honor* is at stake!"

There was a long silence, and every face at the table was turned on Willum.

"Come," Jane commanded, "I shall not wait. I can injure most of you before you can stop me, and I will. Willum *lay down your gun!*"

Willum quivered, first in the eyes and then in the lips and finally from head to foot. She saw that he could not deny her though he felt it was unfair. She saw him give way at last with a wrench, draw his revolver and lay it on the empty trencher, in a silence broken only by George's deep breathing and the grinding of the ice pack out beyond the beach.

Then, at a snarl from the dark, stained mouth across the table, she saw Willum retrieve his gun in a flash and turn it full upon the man who had dared him.

"Who's running this?" he thundered. "Yer gun—here, and a'mighty quick!" He held the trencher under the dark face while the minutes drew into an eternity. Then slowly he was obeyed.

"Now the raefle from the bunk-'ouse," he directed the Youngster.

And when the boy had brought it Willum laid his own revolver on top of it.

"Tis a'," he said as he sat down before the pile of guns; and the sweat was running off his eyebrows. He sat there when the others had gone, his head on his chest, and a shaking like palsy had taken hold of him. Jane waited while speech heaved and groaned within him.

"'Twas a' but killin'," he shuddered, "and 'twas me started it. Yet I meant ye no haerm—I never meant ye no haerm, m'lady. I thought yer man'd divide the go'd."

"Willum," said Jane, trembling now and more than willing he should go before he should notice it, "Willum, gie me yer sacred worrd ye'll no more be plottin' in yer haert 'gen me nor your master, and then ye may gao to yer work."

WILLUM was in the throes of confession. He went on unheeding: "Ye did not knaew me, but it's a' on the trencher yon—the trickle o' water I plucked ye from when ye were no more'n a wee game plover for height, Lady Jane. I mind haew ye stud me off and slappit me when I would 'a bussed ye there," he said sadly, picking up his cap.

She held the door wide.

"Ye were a'ways a wilfu' wee whippit of a lass!" he concluded to the closed door, for Jane could no longer stand, and he should not see her stifling her helpless laughter while the tears poured down her cheeks.

VI

JANE had locked and barred them out, but the noise of their fighting surged from shed to bunk and around her cabin. Willum was paying dear for his loyalty. It was during the last hour before darkness that the battle raged hottest, and her fear was most insistent. If Willum was overcome and they set fire to the cabin it would be in the dark. Reuben had warned her of guns, cold, or heat. Suddenly a heavy object was flung against her door, again and again, she heard the harsh breathing, of struggling men. After that there was a prolonged silence and at last she ventured to look out. Willum, badly swollen of face and with a black eye, stood guard.

"I'd scarce be askin' ye to trust me," he whispered, "but I'll be needin' the gun any minute now."

Jane did not hesitate. She gave him his own and another revolver.

"The plan was to fire the cabin—to roast out the go'd, but the Youngster'll be takin' a hand wi' me, so don't 'e worry, m'lady."

He motioned toward the bunk: "Is he bad now?"

She shook her head, quite unnerved by his sympathy.

He looked wistfully at her: "When ye'd be tellin' o'd Sir John about un, could 'e forget mayhap paert o' the waerst o' it? If 'e would tell 'im that Willum takkit care o' his girl fur 'im at the last——"

"I will, Willum—I'll tell him that," she promised, her eyes smarting, "if we get out safe."

"'E'll get out fast enough. And Willum bides on guard—mind that—Willum bides. Ae wor a poacher and a t'ief—o'd Sir John had raeght to wallop 'un, but tell 'im ae didnut 'arm his wee plover."

She heard George stirring and closed William outside.

"Please God the morn'll bring 'e better luck!" he muttered.

THE sliding, lilting note of the longspur-meadowlark of the North waked Jane.

"George!" she cried softly and looked down from her bunk. George smiled up at her and she slipped down to pull aside the curtains. There in the blue channel lay the little *Taku*, scraped and raw from her contact with the ice floes but beautiful beyond telling to the two who watched her from the cabin window.

"England!" whispered Jane, not daring to mention the twins.

"Safe haven," answered her husband.

He was still heavy with sleep, but as he lay watching her pack with rising excitement, till she was flinging things into her boxes pell-mell, she thought him much too grave. She threw open the door on to a morning of shimmering rose and gold; of magic, flowery green meadows and distant snowpeaks, and the icefields that touch the pole.

She came back to him with shining eyes. "George, dear!" she cried, "come—be glad with me. We are *living*—it is spring once more—we're going home to the twins!"

He held her cheek against his in silence.

"And—the trouble is all over—everything is settled," she added more doubtfully; "the miserable gold is all here under the bunk."

"Settled?" he frowned at her, holding her off. "Settled? Who says it is settled—who settled it?"

"I did. I settled Willum and he settled the others."

"You mean you silenced him, and he silenced the others," he amended.

"I thought you were asleep," she managed.

"The drug held me down, but I heard everything."

Her triumph turned bitter. "Would you have had me let them murder us—rob—us—burn the roof over us?" she demanded. "Would you have had me give in to their bullying?"

His face changed with each fierce question, from concern, to amazement, to tenderness, and then to amusement.

He glanced through the window and sprang out of bed. Jane watched him stretch luxuriously in the joy of renewed strength. She was secretly delighted with her self-elected rôle of Providence; while he dressed she reveled in the sense of his dependence upon her.

"YOU fierce little female, protector of the species! What you settled was the future safety of your mate and your young, not the justice of participation in the fruits of labor. You bullied Willum into subsiding this once, but that only puts off the question he raised upon some one else."

"Would *you* have given in—given up?" she demanded.

"Not a bit of it—it isn't mine."

"Well, I don't see *why* you——"

"Come! We're going home!" he cried, lifting her in his arms, holding her close. "We're going home to the twins. We've all our lives to argue over our bit in the making of economic history, but we've only two minutes for me to tell you what a dear, plucky little mortal you are—they're coming for the loot—the captain is just outside."

This was too much! Jane drew herself erect, away from the softening influence upon her intelligence of his caress.

"How can you prove, George Burchard, that your old theories will make any better economic history than my perfectly good instincts?" she demanded.

"I can't," he admitted with fascinating candor. "I can not prove a thing—it's all to be proved yet, except the mess that instincts have made of things so far." Something flamed up in him: "But I'm perfectly willing to die trying to prove it!"

Jane adored him. She felt earth-bound while he had wings. She laid hold on him. "Wait for me!" she begged like a child left behind, and once again their laughter joined and fell silent in a long embrace.

Her tide of happiness rose and overflowed. "Life is one long, beautiful lark, if only everybody knew it."

"And would play the game," he supplemented.

"Cricket, of course," she agreed.

He turned her face to his and looked her in the eyes:

"And death?"

With a rush of protective tenderness she spread her arms over and about him, and her heart flamed to meet his.

"Death too," she answered him.

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Photo by White.

Frances Starr in one of the New York season's early importations—Edward Knoblock's play "One."

Importing Tears *and* Laughter

By Alexander Woollcott

SINCE the old English playgoer professes to be quite agitated because every other theatre in the Strand and Piccadilly is preempted by some frightfully American farce or melodrama, it might be worth while calling his attention to the fact that London is sending us at least a dozen plays this season, that we are glad of it, and that, of the dozen, at least five or six seem among the most inviting things scheduled for production in New York this winter.

Thanks to London, we shall see the tragic and unforgettable play which Barrie wrote with his left hand; the war play which Galsworthy devised and triumphantly produced without letting any one know that that was what it was; the magnum opus which Sacha Guitry penned under the impression (fortunately premature) that his death was at hand; a two-hundred-year-old comic opera which is now outshining all its descendants in Hammersmith; and the ironic comedy which St. John Ervine and H. G. Wells have written on the inspiration of the promise that John Barrymore will play it.

By way of explanation of his wandering abroad this summer and gathering the exciting impressions here set down of the foreign plays, actors, actresses and authors coming this winter to try American theatregoers' fancy, the well-liked dramatic critic of the New York *Times* offers only a parable. "It is a well-known fact," he says, "that when hard-working actors get a night off between runs they like to go to a show and see somebody else act." So, likewise, Mr. Woollcott rambled abroad to see the foreign critic crit. In cold fact, however, London and Paris are the laboratories in which the most startling dramatic experiments are usually first made, and the bombs of entertainment there gingerly put together are well-worth keeping an eye on so that when they go off here we can pretend not to be surprised.

It is quite possible that the year may bring forth in New York a better play than "Mary Rose," the new Barrie work which has been the wonder and delight of London since early May. But it is not likely. This is the gravest and most austere thing he has written for the theatre, a play brimful of all his own unmistakable chuckles and whimsies, but one of none the less tragic import to those who interpret their own lives in its terms, one none the less dismaying to the sentimental and the self-coddled who, heretofore, have been able to have such a comfortable time in Barrie's theatre. It is quite his best play, or at least you would call it so if it were not for certain haunting memories of "Peter Pan," which, after all, was, in more senses than one, incomparable.

Mary Rose is a quaint, gentle English girl; to her father and mother, the light of their quiet lives; to her strapping young husband, a being to be greatly and wonderingly cherished; to her bouncing baby boy, a most fond and adoring mother. Out of this sheltered, sunlit, love-warmed life she vanishes one day—vanishes suddenly and completely, without leaving so much as a trace to tell her desolate family why or

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whither or how. Then, twenty-five years later, as suddenly and as inexplicably, she reappears. Back to her bewildered people she comes unchanged, with nothing in the look of her to show that she has been away for more than a day, for more than an hour, with nothing in her manner to show she knows she has been away at all.

Uncomprehendingly, she comes back to a household that has half-forgotten *Mary Rose*. Long since, the first grief has given way to sadness. The sadness, in turn, to a merciful forgetfulness. Whole days and weeks have slipped placidly by, without the comfortable and preoccupying routine of their waning lives ever being interrupted by a single disturbing memory of one who had once been their whole existence. They are old. The father is bent and querulous, the gentle mother faded and worn. The handsome young husband is now grizzled, middle-aged, a little paunchy. He is an ambitious, hard-hitting admiral in the British Navy, eager for the war he thinks must come. The baby—well, a mutinous runaway at twelve, he has vanished somewhere into the Far East, and except that they hear of him occasionally as exploring all the dives from Vancouver to Singapore, they know nothing of him.

It is to such a household that *Mary Rose* comes back, a piteous reunion because they no longer have anything in common, because however faithfully their sympathy and their conscience may fan the cold ashes of their old devotion, she can not really be welcome; because, in short, they are different people from those who had loved her when she went away. Life does move on. No grief, no loss halts for a day or hour the steady turning of its wheel. In the tragedy of "Mary Rose," the antagonist is Time, relentless.

The last you see of her in life, she is running anxiously to the long-closed nursery where her baby's cradle had stood. It is this unfinished quest for her child that tethers the restless spirit of *Mary Rose* to earth and the poignant final scene in the bare, deserted house is written just to show the end of that quest. When these two come face to face at last, the baby has become a coarse, swaggering, hairy man, an Aussie fresh from the winning of the war, a fellow scarred from more than one kind of battle. It is his fate to know that this is his mother; to know that he is tragically, grotesquely different from what her prayers for him had been, to have to hope, not that she will recognize her son, but, for her own sake and for his, that she never, never will.

Here Barrie has stood it as long as he can. He pushes the crystal from him. *Mary Rose* never knows. Yet her quest is completed, her pilgrimage on earth brought to an end. To the sound of heavenly music she goes out toward the stars.

In preparing for this play, Barrie has wrought out of his own fancy the legend of a mist-hung, mystical island, a spot of land set in an inland lake which the natives call the Island That Likes To Be Visited. From it, according to the tales old crones tell over the fire of a winter's night, time and again have travelers vanished never to be found again. According to the legend, these passers-by hear a call inaudible to other ears, step away along the wooded shore in obedience to its summons, and are seen no more.

J. M. Barrie, whose new play "Mary Rose," written with his left hand, will be an event of the season.

ON THE Island That Likes To Be Visited, *Mary Rose* and her young husband are picnicking when the summons comes. It is after the gayest of luncheons there on the moss-covered rocks, with the rowan berries drooping to hear the idle chatter. It comes while the husband is stamping out the fire and the pessimistic boatman from Aberdeen is bailing out the craft that was to bear them all back to the mainland—then it is that the weird and beautiful music of the call is heard.

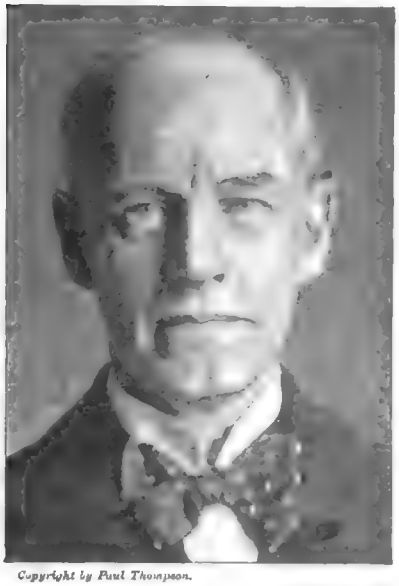
These eery strains are first sounded in the darkened theatre before the curtain rises and again at last when the spirit of *Mary Rose* takes flight. It is music written in Debussy's vein and played by invisible harps and cellos. Into its strains are woven from time to time the sound of rushing winds and occasionally the tones of soprano voices. The composer is Norman O'Neill. Of course this music helps immeasurably to induce the mood that will accept the story, but all the people who are struggling at the playwright's craft will do well to study the simple and telling means by which Barrie himself has made his legend plausible. "Mary Rose" is such a masterly piece of craftsmanship that no one notices the fact.

The title rôle is played in London by Fay Compton, the comely auburn-haired sister of Compton Mackenzie, who has written so often and so readably of life behind the scenes.

It was Barrie's idea that, just as she had been his first *Babbie* and his American *Peter Pan*, so Maude Adams should be *Mary Rose* in this country, but after many months' reflection, she said no, and October brought the announcement that, when the new play came to the Empire for Christmas, the *Mary Rose* would be Ruth Chatterton.

This play in which Miss Compton has found such favor—for all her buxomness, she is quite adorable as *Mary Rose*—was literally written by Barrie's left hand, to which he has had laborious recourse since writers' cramp crippled the other one. It is strange that the most disturbing of all answers to the spiritualists, who have so engrossed England since the war, should be made by Barrie, that he, who has been so busy all his days in softening and making glamorous the harsh facts of life, should of all writers for the theatre be the one to face death there most uncompromisingly. But as he himself has said, a fellow never can tell what manner of ideas will come down his left arm and glare at him from his sheet of paper.

The piece by John Galsworthy which has had so triumphant a run in London—quite a novel experience for him, by the way—is called "The Skin Game." It is amusing to note that he got it staged and embraced by the public at a time when playgoers were supposed to run from war plays as from a plague and when, at the very sight of such a thing in manuscript, any manager was guaranteed to turn pale and call faintly for restoratives. Galsworthy managed to smuggle it into popularity by not calling it a war play at all and by not letting any casual observer know it was one. You might not notice it yourself, unless some one gave you the key or you happened to pick it up in any of the several places where the author has dropped it. Certainly "The Skin Game" has been hugely enjoyed by hundreds of London audiences without many of them suspecting its dark significance or even perceiving that it had a fourth dimension.



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Galsworthy, who put a war-play over on London without their knowing it was one.

THEIR enthusiasm can probably be traced to the sensational third act—the kind for which Bernstein used to be scolded by all the modernists a few years ago—with its most unworthy (you might almost say its most un-Galsworthy) contrivances to heighten the suspense. It is the scene where, with a spying maid ever eavesdropping from behind a screen, the woman cornered by her past tries to buy her blackmailer's silence by offering him her body.

The play deals with a fight between two households—on the one hand the dignified old *Hillcrist* family, on the other an encroaching and distasteful set of parvenus named *Hornblower*. Feeling in the *Hornblower* camp runs high because the disdainful *Mrs. Hillcrist* will not recognize them, but open war is not declared until the ruthless *Hornblower* evicts the *Jackmans*, two innocent old *Hillcrist* tenants whom he had negligently promised to leave

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undisturbed in their little cottage. In the bitter war of extermination which follows, the fastidious *Hillcrists* are driven half-unconsciously to the ugliest and most cruel kinds of blackmail, the poison gas of society, before the *Hornblowers* are obliged to leave the neighborhood. So the victory goes to the *Hillcrists*, yet when you see the victorious head of the household at the last, he is not flushed with his triumph but gnawed by his own misgivings. He hardly notices the grateful *Jackmans* when they come to thank him.

"I'd forgotten their existence," he explains bitterly. "What is it that gets loose when you begin a fight and makes you what you think you're not? What blinding evil! Begin as you may—it ends in this—skin game! Skin game!"

His little daughter rushes to him in affectionate protest.

"It's not you, Dodo," she cries. "It's not you, beloved Dodo."

"It *is* me," he answers sternly. "For I am, or should be, master in this house. When we began this fight, we had clean hands—are they clean now? What's gentility worth if it can't stand fire?"

On that the curtain falls, leaving you with a fairly vivid impression of what reflections another and somewhat larger fight begat in John Galsworthy's mind. He says no more than is here reported, save to write a proverb across the fly-leaf of the published play. It is an old one: "Who touches pitch shall be defiled."

Of course Galsworthy always writes with a careful justice, seeking ever to speak both sides of a controversy fairly, so that the sympathies in any audience of his are likely to be pretty evenly balanced. Yet it is worth noting that the average occupant of a stall at St. Martin's Theatre in London, where "The Skin Game" is playing, is far more sympathetic with the *Hornblowers* than he would have been had the same play been set forth in precisely the same manner ten years ago.

Photo by White.

Alys Delysia, the French music-hall Amazon, who has come to shock New York this winter.

"THE Wonderful Visit" had its origin as a play in the enthusiasm that John Barrymore's acting aroused in the sympathetic and hospitable mind of St. John G. Ervine, when that war-wounded Irish playwright was brought to this country a year ago by the shining New York success of his two somber plays, "Jane Clegg" and "John Ferguson." It had its origin as a story in a fantastic and ironic tale spun by the prolific H. G. Wells when he was only twenty-seven—so long ago that most of his admirers have since forgotten that he ever wrote it.

It is the story of an angel who, with flashing of strange lights and to the accompaniment of music of unearthly beauty, falls headlong into a virtuous, stuffy and complacent English village. There he is stoned by the children, laughed at by the curate, cataloged as a defective by the village doctor, and generally put in his place by all the best people of the community. Thus his glory fades, but he dies in splendor in the crash of a burning house from which he was trying to rescue a flame-trapped servant girl. Afterward, they remember him only by an occasional glimpse of his neglected grave and a frequent intimation on the part of the curate's wife that there had been something discreditable in his relations with that servant girl.

St. John Ervine, author of "John Ferguson" and "Jane Clegg," has collaborated with H. G. Wells on a new fantastic satirical play to be seen here this season.

Wells at first rather poohpoohed the notion of Ervine's turning his old story into a play, but when he heard that Barrymore wanted it, he became interested, bore Ervine off to his house and insisted that the dramatization be revised according to lights that had come to him from time to time in the considerable interval since he was twenty-seven. They spent a week together, furiously rewriting in separate rooms and meeting only for tempestuous arguments about each scene, which they both enjoyed immensely.

Sacha Guitry, actor and son of an actor, has written the play we are to see about Jean-Gaspard and Charles Deburau, the equally famous father and son of the French theatre in the heydey of pantomime. They were the great Pierrots in the days when that moon-struck zany, who invaded France from the old Italian harlequinades, was the darling of Paris. That was in the thirties and forties of the last century, and you meet De Musset, George Sand, and Victor Hugo. You see the lovely Marie Duplessis, from whom the younger Dumas derived the play we all know as "Camille." You are even present at her first fateful meeting with Duval.

Before "Deburau" was written, Sacha Guitry, the indefatigable playboy of the French stage, had been writing and acting away at a great rate, tossing off the most trivial farces for himself and his wife and occasionally a weightier play to exhibit the art of his father, Lucien Guitry, now an elderly man, but still the great French actor, for whom "Chanticler" was written. Then came intimations to the younger Guitry that he himself was not long for this world, and under the pressure of this warning he wrote what he meant should stand as a masterpiece, to go down through the generations in the eternal repertoire of the French stage, where good plays never die. This was "Deburau."

Granville Barker has done the English version in rimed couplets and David Belasco has seized upon it for production in this country. He is to produce it in his own fashion with the title rôle entrusted to Lionel Atwill, a stalwart young English actor who came to us inconspicuously some seasons ago and in whom Belasco sees the portents of a great future. At any rate, with a few magical words and mystical passes of the hand, he will make him a star.

Speaking of Guitry, we are likely to see another play of his before so very long, for James K. Hackett has acquired the rights to his "Pasteur" and firmly intends to produce it here some day, with himself in the title rôle. "Pasteur" deals with the life

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Photo by White.

Preparing the gewgaws and Oriental contraptions for the extravaganza spectacle "Mecca," which autumn brought from London.

of the great French scientist, something after the method employed by John Drinkwater in writing "Abraham Lincoln." It was written for Lucien Guitry and presented by him at the Vaudeville in Paris in the darkest days of the war. His superb performance was repeated to a London audience last May, and the cheers that greeted it then will long be remembered by those who heard them. It was one of the most enthusiastic premières within the memory of London playgoers, but "Pasteur" without Guitry and far from France —well, we shall see. Or perhaps we shall. It is, by the way, the only instance that comes to mind of a French drama without a single woman in it.

Mr. Drinkwater has by no means been idle since he retired to England after all the lectures and luncheons which the amazing success of his Lincoln play involved for him in America. After a considerable period of hibernation, he emerged with the script of his promised play on Mary, Queen of Scots—only to find that its length, good perhaps for a performance lasting an hour and a half, led to its being received by the producers in nervous and gingerly fashion. Whether he could pad it out without seeming to, or, failing that, whether there could be found a suitable one-act play to serve as its curtain-raiser—that was the first question. Then rose one as to who would best play *Mary Stuart* in our day and generation. Would Laurette Taylor do? And, if so, could she be persuaded to depart from her fixed custom of appearing only in plays written by her husband? In the fall these were burning questions. Perhaps they will all have been answered by the time this is read. At all events, we are to see "Mary Stuart" some day. For all the plays herein announced are either here or on their way.

Then from that same out-of-the-way Hammersmith Theatre, which was unknown even to many London playgoers until the year's run of "Abraham Lincoln" drew all the world's attention to it, there is coming the spirited and decorative revival of "The Beggar's Opera," which has been causing such a great stir there ever since early summer. This is the early eighteenth-century forerunner of the Savoy operas. Mr. John Gay's is a truly Gilbertian libretto, for all its Billingsgate and subsequently banned "tales of bawdry," and it is set to a score of old ballad tunes that were the high-water marks of the English composers before they fell under the domination of musicians from across the Channel. Mr. Gay's opera was first published in 1728 and the effort of the present revival has been to whittle away all the attempted improvements which it accumulated in a hundred years of popularity. An orchestra just right for its simple old melodies and a company of singers good enough to do full justice to such sprightly lyrics as "Over the Hills and Far Away" and "How Happy Could I Be With Either Were T'Other Dear Charmer Away"—these are some of the factors which set all the world going again to that absurd Hammersmith Theatre of Arnold Bennett's. It was soon decided that the easiest way to duplicate its success in New York would be to import the London production, lock, stock and barrel.

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Lionel Atwill, the newest young Englishman to be starred by Belasco in Sacha Guitry's play "Deburau."

Another musical importation, though one of very different quality, is "Afgar," a popular London révue chiefly interesting because it brings us Alys Delysia, the French music-hall favorite who has been fighting

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shy of us these many seasons. In her early days Delysia was a husky midinette in Paris and her eventual place in the French theatre was so humble that when she was invited to London in 1914 it was at so modest a salary as six pounds a week. But London liked her. The English playgoers complained that she couldn't sing so very well and protested at her coarseness, but flocked fascinated to see her just the same. Tall, blonde, vigorous, she is utterly different from the little grisette type of French music-hall artistes who have ogled and flirted across our footlights ever since the days when Anna Held first sang "Oh won't you come out an' play wiz me?" many years ago.

The same American house is playing host here to "Mecca," the mixture of pageantry and extravaganza devised by Oscar Ashe for his own use but now regretfully relinquished by him for the use of the Century Theatre in New York. He had planned it as a successor to "Chu Chin Chow" at the time when he blithely contracted to play that earlier piece of his as long as it should run at the Haymarket Theatre. That was in the early fall of 1916, and not only has "Chu Chin Chow" been running on there ever since, but it gives every indication of running forever.

The Theatre Guild has two English plays in its lists—Shaw's "Heartbreak House," already long familiar here in book form, and "Mr. Pim Passes By." This is by A. A. Milne, the young English essayist who was fondly known to the readers of *Punch* by his ever-welcome initials and whose latest book, "Not That It Matters," is full of gentle and whimsical humor. This play of his is no great shakes, but for all that, a pleasant enough adventure in high comedy. It trifles with a very respectable and humorless Englishman who has a feverish day when he learns that his wife's first husband had not been dead, as they both assumed, when he married her. The information is dropped unconsciously by *Mr. Pim*, an abstracted little old gentleman who chances to stop in to ask his way. He first leads them to believe that the first husband was living when the lady remarried, then relieves their feelings by further informing them that the fellow had died later anyway and, just before he goes his way, calms them all down by coming to the conclusion that, all the time, he had been thinking of some one else. The utter woe of the husband, the unseemly levity of the wife and *Mr. Pim's* own blissful unconsciousness that his chatter is of any importance to them—out of such stuff Mr. Milne has made an agreeable comedy which can provide considerable diversion when it is well played—which it certainly was not in London.

Of course some of these importations were passed on early in the season. There was Ian Hay's "Happy-Go-Lucky," for instance, and a deadly pseudo-Irish comedy of the "Bad 'cess to 'em" variety called "Paddy the Next Best Thing," which the first audiences did not find funny at all, at all. Then the early season suffered the Graham Moffats from Scotland, with their "Don't Tell," and sat respectfully through "One," the new Belasco play in which Frances Starr is entrusted with the double rôle of twin sisters born with a single soul. This is the latest work of Edward Knoblock, and so must be set down among the English plays, for, though born in America of partially German ancestry, and educated at Harvard, Knoblock now lives in London and derives everything from England save his royalties.

For, no matter what their nativity or what their habitat, all English-speaking playwrights the world over put pen to paper with the thought in the back of their minds that some day their piece will be played before that largest and, by a slight margin, that most discriminating audience, the American public. Indeed, the best of them—Shaw, Galsworthy, Ervine—count chiefly on the audiences that wait them on this side of the Atlantic.

Time was when New York saw only such English works as Charles Frohman decided New York would like. Now there is much coming and going of managers and Chicago, New York and London are but three stands in one huge circuit. Whenever a new play is produced for the first time in any one of them, there is a great rushing of scouts to the cable offices with tidings as to its reception and advice as to its purchase. There is a constant exchange of plays between New York and London, to the general enrichment of their respective seasons. Particularly, New York's.

Photo by White.

These young ladies are trying to get used to these uncomfortable positions in preparation for the riotous scenes of "Afgar," the popular London Revue imported this season.

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In Red *and* Gold

A Romance of the Greatest River

By Samuel Merwin

Author of "Temperamental Henry," "The Hills of Han," etc.

IV

THE STORY SO FAR

ON BOARD a river steamer, leaving Shanghai in 1911 for a voyage up the Yangtze-Kiang, are brought together Dawley Kane, an American millionaire, his son, Rocky Kane, a much-spoiled society youth; Braker, the financier's secretary, and a Japanese traveling assistant; Miss Andrews, an American girl, and her older companion, Miss Means; three notorious characters of the China Coast, Tex Connor, The Manila Kid—and a girl, Dixie Carmichael. Soon after the start, Connor and the Kid draw young Kane and others into a card game, which the mate of the steamer, Griggsby Doane, quietly and forcefully breaks up. By way of substitute diversion the Kid then arranges a boxing match between a Chinese "prizefighter" and Doane. Doane consents to take part, understanding that the bout is only to afford a little exercise for him and amusement for the men. It proves to be an occasion for gambling on the result and for a disgusting fight, against a foul opponent, whom Doane is compelled to knock out. In the fight Doane's physical strength and force of personality impress every one, including the elder Kane. The Viceroy of Nanking, who has come aboard later with his daughter and retinue, is present at the fight; he afterward invites Doane to luncheon. Rocky Kane, during the fight, attempts in a chance encounter on deck, a brutal flirtation with a Chinese girl who he does not know is the daughter of the Viceroy, later sending her an insulting clandestine note, which comes to the captain. Doane goes to his cabin to warn him and finds him smoking opium.

At the luncheon with the Viceroy are revealed something of Doane's past and of the Viceroy's unhappy position in the new currents of Chinese life, where, like Doane in relation to his own land, America, he stands between two worlds, the old and the new. At the end he meets the Viceroy's daughter, Hui Fei, who asks to see him later alone. At Kiu Kiang, where the steamer stops, two deserting soldiers of the Viceroy are shot; there are rumors of outbreaks up the river. While the steamer is held up, Dixie Carmichael learns the meaning of all this through young Kane, and tries to get Tex Connor and the Manila Kid to plan a raid on the priceless collection of jewels at the Viceroy's ancestral home. Hui Fei, meeting Doane, tells him her father is returning there to take his life in obedience to the orders of the dissolute and tottering Imperial Court, who fear his Western sympathies.

She herself is to be taken by the Imperial messenger to the Court as wife of some Imperial favorite.

At a dance on board an evening later Rocky Kane, moved by remorse, asks Doane to interpret his apology to the Viceroy and asks Hui Fei for a dance. She politely rebuffs him. Rocky in a fit of depression goes off to smoke opium in Dixie Carmichael's cabin. That night a battle breaks out between the revolutionists and the Viceroy's soldiers on board, and later the steamer is found afire, and is beached. The Viceroy's party is rescued, but a child, the little Princess, is accidentally left behind. Rocky Kane, roused from his opium daze by Doane, finds her, and with Doane swims ashore with her. Hui Fei warms to the young man's heroism.

Chapter Seven

The Inscrutable West

I

DOANE knew nothing of the dignified figure he presented as he took the viceroy's hand—simple in manner, restrained, courteous as always, his huge frame outlined beneath his wet garments like a Greek statue of an athlete.

"You have helped to save the life of my child, Griggsby Doane"—thus his Excellency, in what proved to be a little set speech—"and with all my heart I thank you. I am old. Little time is left to me. But life follows upon death. Death is the beginning of life. It has been said by Chuang Tze that the personal existence of man results from convergence of the vital fluid, and with its dispersion comes what we term death. Therefore all things are one. All vitality exists in continuing life. And I, when what I have thought of as my self arrives at dispersion, shall live on in my children. My words are inadequate. My debt to you is beyond my power to repay. Command me, I am your servant."

Doane bowed, hearing the words, catching something of the warm gratitude in the heart of the old man, yet at the same moment flogged on to action by the sense of passing time and present opportunity. It was no simple matter, it seemed, to approach this seasoned, calmly determined mind regarding the final personal matter of life and death. But he plunged at it; stating simply that he had heard the gossip of the impending tragedy, and that in conversing with the lovely Hui Fei, who was in obvious difficulty in existing between the two greatest civilizations without a solid footing in either, he could not bear to think of her possible fate.

Tang Chi T'ung listened attentively.

"Your Excellency," Doane pressed on, "it is not right that you should listen to the command of a decadent throne. Forgive my frankness, my presumption, but I must say this! True, you are a Manchu. While this revolution continues it will be difficult for you. But before another year shall have gone by there will be a new China. The bitter animosities of to-day will pass. Though a Manchu, your wise counsel will be needed. Your knowledge of the Western World will temper the overemphatic policies of the young hot-heads from the universities of Japan."

The Viceroy considered this appeal during a long moment; then, soberly, he looked up into the massive, strongly lined face of the white man and asked simply:

"But what would you have me do, Griggsby Doane?"

"Your Excellency knows of the plan to seize your property?"

T'ang inclined his head.

"If you go on to your home, it may be that everything will be taken, even the money on your person."

T'ang bowed again.

"Then, your Excellency, why not now—while you yet have the means to do so—escape down the river with your daughter and myself? I will find means to convey you safely to Shanghai—perhaps to Japan or Hongkong—where you will be secure until further plans may be laid."

"Griggsby Doane," replied the Viceroy, with simple candor, "you speak indeed as a friend. And I would be false to the blood that flows in my veins did I not prize the friendship of man for man, second only to the love of a son for a parent, above every other quality in life. Friendship is most properly the theme of many of the noblest poems in our language. It is to us more than your people, who place so strong an emphasis on love between the sexes, can perhaps bring themselves to understand. And therefore, Griggsby Doane, your feeling toward myself and my daughter moves my heart more deeply than I can express to you.

"IT IS not surprising that news of my sorrow—of this sad ending that is set upon my long life—should have reached you. But since you know so much, I will tell you, as friend to friend, more. Do you know why this sentence has been passed upon me? It is because I could not bring myself to obey the order of the throne that the republican agitator, Sun Shi-pi, who had sought sanctuary near my yamen in Nanking, should be at once beheaded. Instead I sent for Sun Shi-pi to counsel him. I permitted him to go to Japan on condition that he engage in no conspiracies and that he remain away. Instead of complying with my condition he hastened to organize revolutionary propaganda. He returned to China, appeared in disguise on the steamer that is now burning out

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yonder, and is now dead, there, in his republican uniform."

So his information was complete! A picture rose in Doane's mind of the headless trunk of Sun Shi-pi amid the horrors of the lower deck.

His Excellency continued:

"I was denounced at the Forbidden City as a traitor. The sentence of death followed, in the form of an edict from the Empress Dowager in the name of the young Emperor. Were I now to follow Sun Shi-pi into exile in a foreign land I would mark myself for all time as a traitor indeed; as one who, while sharing as an honored viceroy the prosperity and dignity of the reigning dynasty, conspired toward its downfall."

"But, your Excellency, the Empress Dowager and the young Emperor no longer speak with the voice of the Chinese people."

"That could make no difference, Griggsby Doane. By edict of the Yellow Dragon Throne of Imperial China I have been instructed to go to my ancestors. My allegiance is only to that throne. I will obey. Already, Griggsby Doane, you have done for me more than one can ever demand of a friend. And yet one more demand I must make upon you. There is no other to whom I can turn; I have no other friend to-night. Within a short time my secretaries will secure a junk to convey us to my home near Huang Chow. Will you come with us there?"

Doane, surprised, bowed in assent.

"Thank you. In one matter more I shall need your help. The gratitude of myself and all my family and friends will remain with you. You are a princely man. Until later, then, good night, Griggsby Doane."

He was gone.

Doane walked farther along the bank; stood for a time absorbed in thought that led, at length, to what seemed a new ray of light in the darkness that was his mind. And he strode back, hunting in this group and that for Dawley Kane. That man had offered help. Now he could give it.

II

DAWLEY KANE, fully dressed, unruffled, quietly smoking a cigar and looking through a pocket note-book by the light from the river, seemed a note of sanity in an unbelievably confused world. To him, apparently, the nightmare of fighting and slaughter on the steamer, like the fire, were but incidents. The only evidence the man gave out of quickened nerves was that he talked freely. To Doane he presented a surface as clear and hard as polished crystal, impenetrable, in a sense repelling; yet, as we say, a gentleman.

They even chatted casually, as men will, standing there looking out at the fire (which now had reached the stern and eaten down to the lower decks, incinerating alike the bodies of men who had died for faith and for lust) and at the wide circle of light on the rim of which floated the vulture-like boats of the rivermen. Doane forced himself into the vein of the man's interest, riding roughshod over a desperate sense of unreality. For he knew that the great masters of capital were often proud and even finicky men, who must be approached with skill. They were kings, must be humored as kings.

Kane was interested to learn what relation the fight below decks might have to the large rebellion up the river. That, clearly, was his mental twist—impersonally gathering and relating observable data. His interest was deeper in the agriculture and commerce of the immense Yangtze basin, to which subject he easily passed. His questions came out of a present fund of knowledge—questions as to the speed, cargo capacity and operation cost of the large junks that plied the river by tens of thousands, as to the cost of employing Chinese labor and the average capacity of the coolie. He knew all about the slowly developing railroads of north and central China; commented in passing on the surprising profits of the young Hankow-Peking line. He seemed to Doane to have in his mind a map or diagram of a huge, profit-making industrial world, to which he added such bits of line or color as occurred in the answers to his questions. But he gave out no conclusions, only questions. Famines, other widespread suffering so tragically common in the Orient, interested him only as an impairment of trade and industrial man power. The opium habit he viewed as an economic problem.

Doane, quieter now, settling doggedly to his purpose, found himself analyzing the power of this quiet man. It lay, of course, in the control of money. And money would be only a token of human energy. The religion of his own ardent years had taken no account of earthly energy or its tokens; it had directed the eyes of the bewildered seeker toward a mystical other world. Yet human life, in the terms of this earth, must go on. To this point he always came around, of late years, in his thinking, just as the church had always come around to it. Money was vital.

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The church was endlessly begging for it; in no other way could it survive to continue turning puzzled eyes away.

And the immense energy created in the human struggle to live and prosper must continually be gathering up, here and there, into visible power that shrewd human hands would surely seize. He felt this now as a law. Religion had not left him. He felt more strongly than ever before that this miraculously continuing energy implied a sublime orderly force that transcended the outermost bounds of human intellect. Religion was surely there; it only wanted discovering. It had, as surely, to do with primitive energy, with the heat of the sun and the disciplined rush of the planets, with the tragic struggle of human business, with work and war and sex and money. And then he indulged in a half-smile. For this primitive undying energy could be no other than the Tao of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu. And so, in all these groping wandering years of his errant faith, he had fetched up, simply, in Taoism!

But that law seemed to stand. The human struggle created power that tended to gather at convenient centers. And here beside him, smoking a cigar, stood a man whose curious genius fitted him to seize that power as it gathered and administer it; a man to whom money came—the very winds of chance heaped it about him. And to Doane, just now, money—even in quantity that would be to Kane hardly the income of a day or so—meant so much that the grotesque want of it (the word "grotesque" came) stopped his brain.

For it was coming clear to him how completely the throne could at will obliterate the worldly establishment of T'ang Chi T'ung. That throne, however politically weak, yet held the savage instruments of despotic power. T'ang's sad end would come within the twenty-four hours, perhaps; certainly he would wait only to prepare himself and to write his final papers. The eunuch's men would be everywhere about the household; nothing could be hid from them, or from the spies among the servants. With money—a little money—Hui Fei might be saved from an end as tragic as her father's. The thing, surely, could be managed. For the moment it seemed almost simple. She could be spirited away. There might be missionaries to escort her down the river on one of the steamers.

IT WAS then, while Doane's thoughts still raced hither and thither, that Kane himself broached the vital topic.

"This Viceroy—" thus Kane—"seems to be quite a personage. He's been a diplomat, I believe. And Kato tells me he has an excellent collection of paintings."

Doane, driven by his turbulent emotions, felt himself turning into a trader.

"You are interested in Chinese painting, are you not, Mr. Kane?" he asked guardedly.

"Oh, yes. I have something of a collection. And now and then Kato picks up something for me."

"I don't know, of course, how far you would care to go with it, Mr. Kane"—Doane was measuring every word as it passed his lips—"but there is a possibility that a bargain could be struck with his Excellency at this time."

"Indeed?"

"It would be advisable to act pretty quickly, I should say."

"Well! This is interesting. You are informed about his collection?"

"In a general way. It is very well known out here. His collection of landscapes of the T'ang and Sung periods is supposed to be the most complete in existence, with fine works of Ching Hao, Kuan Tung, Tung Yuan and Chu-jan. The best-known paintings of Li Chang are his. He has several by Kao Ke-ming, and, I know, an original sixfold landscape screen by Kuo Hsi. Then there are works of the four masters of southern Sung—Li Tang, Lui Sung-nian, Ma Yuen and Hsia Kuai. You would find nearly all the great men of the Academy represented."

III

DOANE stopped; waited to see if this list of names impressed the great American. If he knew, in his own person, anything whatever about Chinese painting he must exhibit at least a little feeling.

But Dawley Kane said nothing; merely lighted, with provoking deliberation, a fresh cigar.

"It is commonly understood, too"—Doane could not resist pressing him a little farther—"that he has authentic paintings by Wu Tao-tzu, and Li Lung-mien." Surely these two names would stir this man who seemed at moments no more than a calculating machine with manners. But Kane smoked on. "And I understand that he has a fairly complete collection of portraits by the men of the Brush-strokes-reducing Method."

He finished rather lamely; fell silent, and looked out over the still brilliantly lighted river; the river of a hundred thousand dramatic scenes—battles and romances and struggles for trade—the great river with its endless memories of gold and bloodshed—the river that for a brief day was running red again. The fire out there, though red flame and rolling smoke and whirling sparks still roared upward, was consuming now the lower deck and the hull. Within the hour the *Yen Hsin* would be no more than a curving double row of charred ribs; one more casual memory of the river.

Still Dawley Kane smoked on. He clearly knew no enthusiasm. He was an analyst, an appraiser, a trader to the core. He felt no discomfort, even in friendly talk, in letting the other man wait.

But Doane would say no more. And finally, knocking the ash off his cigar with a reflective finger, Kane remarked:

"You really think that this collection would be a good buy?"

"Unquestionably."

"Have you any idea what he would ask?"

"I don't even know that he would consider selling it."

"But if he were properly approached—there are reasons——"

"You know of his predicament?"

"I gather that there is a predicament."

"Oh, well, yes, there is. But I don't know how even to guess at the value. Many of the paintings are priceless. In New York, at collector's prices, and without hurrying the sale——"

"A hundred thousand dollars?"

"Many times more."

"But if he is anxious to sell—must sell——"

"There is that, of course."

"A hundred thousand is a good deal of money. If I were to place that sum to his credit to-morrow, for instance, by wire, at a Shanghai bank, don't you suppose it would tempt him?"

"It might. Though T'ang knows the value of every piece." Doane was finding difficulty in keeping pace with the situation. Kane would shave every penny; as a matter of principle. That, of course, explained him; was the secret of his wealth and power. Paintings, after all, mattered to him only in a remote sense; you could always buy them if you chose, if people would, as apparently they did, think better of you for buying them. It came down to the desirability of building up and solidifying one's name, of what Doane had heard spoken of everywhere in America during his last visit as "publicity." The word irritated him. It suggested that other word, also heard everywhere in America, "salesmanship." These words, to the sensitively observant Doane, had connoted an unpleasant blend of aggressive enterprise with an equally aggressive plausibility.

BUT his wits were sharpening fast. If this man was a buyer, he would be a seller.

"His Excellency has another collection that might or might not interest you—the value of it would be only slightly artistic—his precious stones." Doane threw this out carelessly. "There is no estimating the value of those. It might run far into the millions." He saw Kane's eyes come to a sudden hard focus behind the veil of smoke. He was really interested at last. And Doane, with mounting pulse, quietly added: "He has historical jewels from many parts of Asia—head ornaments, bracelets, ropes of matched pearls from Ceylon, old carved jade from Khotan, quantities of the jewelry taken from Bactria, Khorassan and Persia by Genghis Khan and his sons, including a number of famous royal pieces, and some of the jeweled ornaments brought from the temples of India by Kublai Khan."

This, Doane knew, was enough. He waited, now, himself. Waited and waited.

"Mr. Doane"—Kane, at last, was speaking—"I would be glad to have you approach the Viceroy for me. To-night, if

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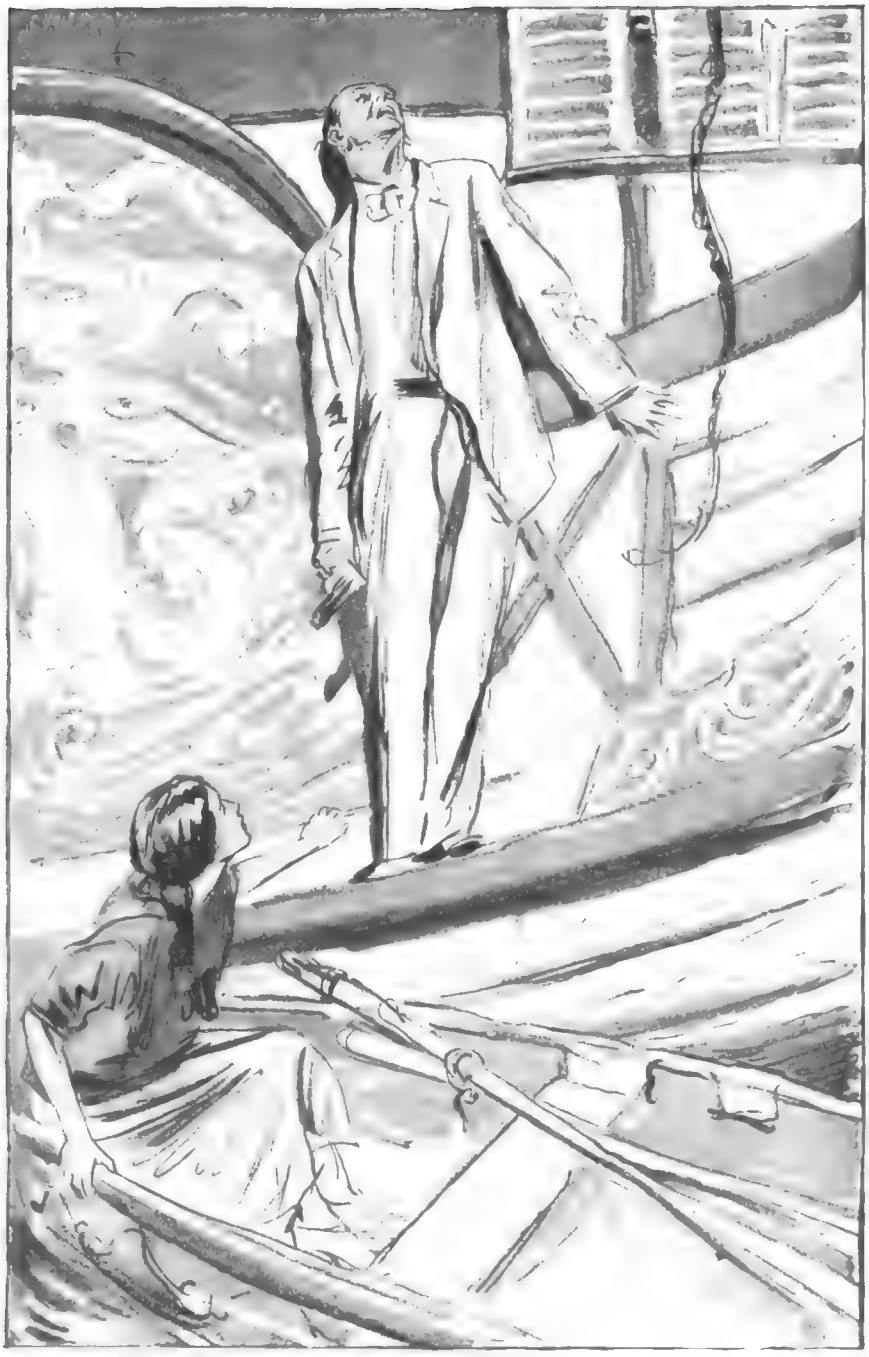

you think best. I will be glad, of course, to pay you a commission."

"Shall I make a definite offer—for the paintings and the jewels?"

"No." Kane considered. "Let him set a price. Then we will make our offer."

"It is safe to say, Mr. Kane—" Doane was remembering experiences of men in church and educational work who had had to approach the great capitalists for gifts of money—"that you could sell half the paintings for what you might pay for the two collections at this time. That would enable you to give the other half, as a collection bearing your own name, to one of the art museums at home, at no cost to yourself."

Kane smoked thoughtfully. "I presume, Mr. Doane," he said, "that the predicament you spoke of can not interfere in any way with the safe delivery of the collections."

Doane considered. How much did this man know? That Japanese, behind his mask of a smile, would be deep, of course. With a sudden sinking of the heart, Doane perceived that Kane might easily have picked up the whole story. But even if he did he would admit nothing. He trusted no one; that was his calm, cynical strength. He would trade to the last. Another swift, if random, perception of this tense moment was that much of the common talk regarding the "inscrutable" East was utter nonsense. Read in the light of history and habit the Oriental mind was anything but deeply mysterious; it was, indeed, very nearly an open book. Whereas the Western mind, with its miraculous religion, its sentimentality and (at the same time) its cynically unscrupulous financial power, could be baffling indeed.

Desperate now, seeing no other way through, Doane spoke out from his tortured heart.

"Mr. Kane, the simple fact is that his Excellency has been condemned to death, and his daughter to a fate that will almost certainly end in death for her as well. They are seizing his property."

"Who are they?"

"The Imperial Government—the Empress Dowager and her crew. They are sending the chief eunuch, Chang Yuan-fu, to take his paintings and jewels, and his daughter, to Peking. Frankly, it may be necessary to hurry matters—smuggle the things out. But the fan paintings can be packed in a parcel or two, the scrolls rolled small on their ivory sticks, the jewels gathered in a few boxes. Once in white hands—they would be safe, I think. I believe I can arrange it. The porcelains and carvings you would probably have to leave behind."

His voice died out. Dawley Kane was coolly appraising him. Their minds were not meeting.

"As you are stating it now, it is a different situation altogether," said Kane, the ring of tempered metal in his voice. "Obviously the man to deal with is the eunuch, What's-his-name."

"But—really——"

"He would have the collections complete including the porcelains and the carvings. I should want them all. He would be ignorant and corrupt, of course; we could buy him for a song. And there would be no risk. Yes, let him get possession. Then if you would like to approach him for me I will be glad to see that you make something for yourself."

Doane drew in his breath. Slowly he said:

"But that, Mr. Kane, seems a good deal like taking a profit out of the Viceroy's misfortune."

But he caught himself. To Kane, who had made enormous profits out of wrecked railways, who had cornered stocks and produce and mercilessly squeezed the short sellers, this would be sentimentality.

Doane heard himself saying——

"I'm sorry. I could hardly undertake it, Mr. Kane," and walked away. His failure was complete. Worse, if there had been any gaps in the information supplied by the ubiquitous little Kato, they were filled now. The fine steel machine that served so smoothly as a brain in the head of the great American, would be working on and on. Through the Japanese he could easily enough reach Chang Yuan-fu from Hankow after the tragedy that now hovered so close over the old Viceroy and all that was his. He could make what he and his suave kind would doubtless regard—the slang word came grimly—as a killing.

IV

THE white men had made a small fire on the bank of dry rushes and thwarts from the boats. There sat Hui Fei, the sleeping little princess in her arms; and, beside her, Rocky Kane. Nearby, where the men had spread coats on the ground, Miss Means and Miss Andrews slept side by side.

Doane walking toward the group—stopping, moving away only to turn irresolutely back—saw young Kane reach over and take the child into his own arms, and saw Hui Fei smile at him. He strode away then, struggling to believe that she could do that. But she had. After all, she knew only that he had acted

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outrageously toward her, had then apologized publicly, boyishly, and now had brought her little sister ashore, himself falling exhausted on the bank. With those few facts, out of her impulsively young judgment she could strike a balance in his favor. Even at his worst he had crudely admired her; for that she might, in the end, forgive him. And his youth would call to her.

Doane, indeed, forced himself to consider the boy dispassionately. The wild oats of any spoiled youth with too much money at his disposal, if brought together, and closely scrutinized, would make an appalling showing. Wild young men did, of course, recover. There was in this boy a note of intensity—passionate, eager—that was by no means all egotism. And there was in the father a hard sort of character that had proved itself indomitable, and that must be taken into account. Yes, it was a simple fact, that many a young fellow had gone farther wrong than had Rocky Kane without wrecking his adult life. You couldn't tell. And there they were, the eager, moody boy and the lovely girl, who was oddly, quaintly conspicuous in her opera wrap, sitting very close, talking in low tones while he walked alone. . . .

Doane told himself that it was better so. Pacing back and forth, dwelling on the quick changeableness of youth, its ardor and sensitive hopefulness, he thought—reaching out for fellowship as will always the hurt soul—of other lonely lives, of Abelard and Jean Valjean, of St. Francis, even of Christ. It was odd—from his present philosophical position of something near Taoism he felt the legendary Christ as a profoundly human and friendly spirit, immeasurably more tender, finer, gentler than the theological structure of thought and conduct that had been erected in his name. He had thought himself very nearly around the circle, back to essential good. This process could bring only humility. Love was a tormenting problem of self; the mature soul must in some measure attain selflessness if it were not to go down in the trampled dust of life. Worldly success was an accident. It was hardly desirable; hardly mattered. That he had within the hour pinned his hope to money, fairly fought for it, began to seem incredible.

The Viceroy found him standing quietly by the river, turning from the slowly dying fire out there to the slowly spreading glow in the eastern sky.

"I like to think," remarked his Excellency, smiling in friendly fashion, "that when the first Buddhist patriarch, Bodhidharma, miraculously crossed the river on a reed plucked from the southern bank, it was not far from here, near my home."

"WAS not your city of Huang Chow the home of Li Po?" asked Doane.

"Indeed, yes!" cried His Excellency. "In some of his excursions on the river he undoubtedly passed the site of my home."

Doane quoted in musical Chinese from that most famous of rhapsodists:

"'One who has hearkened to the waters roaring down from the heights of Lung, and faint voices from the land of Ch'in; one who has listened to the cries of monkeys on the shores of the Yangtze Kiang, and the songs of the land of Pa'. That"—he was musing aloud, reflectively

as the Chinese do—"was written three full centuries, before William of Normandy first set foot on British soil. Li Po so described himself."

They talked on, of life and philosophy, in language interwoven with classical allusions. Friendship, the finest relationship in Chinese civilization, as it stood, had come to them. It brought a kind of peace. It seemed to Doane then that his personal struggle, no matter what atonement might lie before, was over. He forgot again the Western vigor that was and to the last would be driving his spirit. He felt himself again the philosopher.

V

MEANWHILE the swiftly growing acquaintanceship of Hui Fei and Rocky Kane was weaving its bright-tinted weft in and out through the dark warp of Rocky's ill-spent youth. His eyes followed the slightest movement of her slim hands and rested doglike on her finely modeled head, about which the shining wet black hair lay close. To his quick youth she was an exquisite fairy. He felt her as perfume in the air he breathed. Her voice, when she drowsily, prettily spoke, fell on his ear like music in an enchanted land. He could say little; he had never before so lost himself.

She tried daintily to conceal a yawn. And he, clasping the child in both arms, turned away to hide its brother. Then, very softly, she laughed and he laughed.

"You must try to sleep," he said gently.

"I canno' let you keep my sister. You, too, are ver' tire."

"It's nothing. I love to hold her. Really! You see, my life hasn't been this way. Maybe, if I'd had a sister."—he stopped, suddenly, vividly sensing what he had been; a hot flush flooded his sensitive face. He could only add then: "I want you to sleep. It may be hours before the boat comes for you. It's been such a horrible time—such a nightmare."

"But you mus' res', too. One of the servan's will take my sister."

"No!" he cried, low, fiercely. "I won't let any one else have her!" Sensing crudely that the child was a chord between them, he tightened his hold. The little head rolled back on his arm; he bent over, tenderly kissed the soft cheek, then looked over it at Hui Fei, staring. During one brief moment their eyes met full in the flickering red light.

She turned away; in lieu of speech looked about for a spot to lay her head.

"Here!" He laid the child on the ground, and, surprised to find himself collarless and coatless, took off his waistcoat, rolled it up and placed it for a pillow. "It's really pretty well dried out," he added, with an embarrassed little laugh. Then, as she still said nothing, went on: "Do just lie down there. I'll keep awake. We can't count on the servants; they're all scared to death."

Still she hesitated. "I'm afraid I am ver' tire'," she finally remarked, unsteadily. "I can't think ver' clearly."

"It's been awful! And you were wonderful! Swimming out there. I didn't know there was a girl in the world like you." This commonplace speech came ardently out of a blazing face.

SHE answered in a sleepy effort at the matter-of-fact——

"Oh, that wasn't anything. I swam a lot at college. An' I played basketball."

"Listen!" said he, hardly hearing. "I've got to tell you something. I'm not good enough to so much as speak to you."

"Please!" she murmured. "I don' wan' you to talk abou'——"

"I don't mean that. It's other things too." His voice broke, but after a moment he pressed on, a determined look on his curiously youthful face. "I've done every rotten thing I could think of. I'm—well, I guess I'm just a criminal. No, listen—please! It's true. I'm to blame for this awful fire—smoking opium in my cabin. It was my lamp—it must have been. I fell asleep. But I knew better, of course. Oh, God, it's terrible! All those lives, all this suffering! And you—I've nearly killed you—when it was you—" Here, creditably, he caught himself. "Don't think I'm talking wildly. I'm getting at something. Seeing you, meeting you—and now, this—well, I've never seen anybody like you. It's bowled me off my feet. I know what love is, now—Oh, please! I've got to get this out. I love you. I'm crazy about you. I can say that because pretty soon that boat'll come and you'll go and I'll never see you again. It's right, too! I've got to start again—alone—and prove that there's good stuff in me somewhere."

"I'm ver' tire'," she said bravely; and resting her head on the rolled-up waistcoat she lay still.

He waited to hear the regular breathing of the sleeper. She was facing away from him; he couldn't tell. If she had only let him finish! There had been something—some point—he was getting at. He hadn't meant to tire her or hurt her. When the tall eunuch came for the little princess he angrily drove the fellow away. For Hui Fei was sleeping now, peacefully, like the warm little child in his arms.

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VI

AN ENGLISH gunboat was the first relief craft to arrive, in the cool dawn; a tiny gunboat, built for the river, with a white freeboard low as a monitor's, bridge structure forward of the thin, high funnel. The small boat that came ashore made a number of trips, taking off the passengers and the surviving white officers of the *Yen Hsin*.

His Excellency refused, with a calm courtesy, to set foot on the English gunboat that was built for the river; he would wait for the junk that had been sent for.

Dawley Kane found his son, nodding, with the picturesquely clad child in his arms. The boy, glancing at the sleeping Hui Fei, whose head rested comfortably on the rolled-up waistcoat, gave the child now to the patiently waiting eunuch, then fairly dragged his father to the boat. With the Japanese, Kato, and oddly distant to the big mate and the suddenly exotic-appearing Viceroy in his richly embroidered satins who had been after all only casually, for a few days, in their lives, they embarked.

They had nearly reached the gunboat when those on the bank heard young Kane's voice raised in hot protest. There was a moment of argument; then a splash. The boy could be seen then swimming back to shore. And Dawley Kane, turning his back, went on to the gunboat, climbed aboard, and disappeared.

Rocky clambered, dripping, up the bank; came straight to Doane, a staring, exhausted youth, very white.

"I can't do it," he panted. "They've just told me—Kato and the Pater—about this terrible trouble of the Viceroy's and—and Miss Hui Fei's. The Pater said it was time I—got clear of any new entanglement. I—quit him. Oh, I suppose you'll think me a—damn fool, but—" At this point he nearly broke into tears—"but I love that girl, Mr. Doane! If I can't be of some use to her—now, in this awful trouble—I don't want to live. Will you—help me? And let me help?" And, all blind confidence, he offered his hand to the big mate, who took it.

The gunboat hoisted anchor and swung about, heading down-stream.

Passing her, upward bound, came a large junk, with the rig of a trader from Szechuan, her single huge rectangular sail, brown-umber in tint and closely ribbed with battens of bamboo, flat against the one mast that towered, clumsily, amidships. The eight long sweeps, in the low waist and forward, moved rhythmically in time with the syncopated, wailing chant of the eighty to a hundred oarsmen. The tai-kung crouched, bamboo pole in hand, just within the prow.

The hull was of cypress, stained from stem to stern with yellow orpiment and rubbed to a polish with oil. The high after-deck structure, all of fifty feet in length, terminating in a projecting gallery twenty feet or higher above the water, was carved everywhere in intricately decorative designs; as were also the roof over the tillerman's stand on the deck house and the gallery railing, just within which stood a row of flowering plants in yellow-and-green pots. The many small windows along the sides were glazed with opalescent squares of ground oyster-shells and glue; those across the stern, under the gallery, with panes of stained glass.

To no one aboard the gunboat or among the still waiting groups on the bank did the thought occur that this craft might be engaged in other than peaceable business. Her like were not an uncommon sight along the always crowded river. The passing attention she drew was merely that aroused by a richly decorative object moving beautifully, with a remarkably detailed reflection, through the flat water, that itself glowed, under the red and gold of the early morning sky, like a great sheet of burnished old copper. It was not observed that three white faces peered warily out of the shadow, behind as many opened windows; nor could it easily be seen that the figure in blue, sitting, knees drawn up, on the deck-house just behind the laopan, who mercilessly urged on the sweat-shining oarsmen, was none other than the redoubtable Tom Sung.

Chapter Eight

Aboard the Junk

I

IN MAKING their escape from the steamer, Tex Connor and the Manila Kid seized one of the small boats, manning, one at either end, the tackle-falls. Connor was quick, rough, profane. The Kid, breathless with excitement, hesitant, glancing back over the rail for a thinly girlish face that did not, then, appear, worked with ten thumbs at the ropes. Connor's end, the bow, fell first, a short way, nearly pitching him out. He cursed this futile man, his jackal, roundly; then clung to the tackle as the stern fell. The Kid moaned with pain as the slipping hemp burned the skin from his fingers, but held it just short of disaster.

Hot red flames licked out overhead as the boat jerkily dropped. The women were screaming up there. A white man, the second mate, leaned over, swearing vigorously at them. They passed an open freight gangway, where bodies lay.

"Ready now!" cried Connor. "Let go with me!"

"Wait a minute, can't you?" whined the Kid. He was peering into the dark interior of the steamer; gasping a moment more; wrapping a handkerchief about his left hand. "My God! Can't a fellow tie up his hand."

A thin blue figure appeared, stepped lightly over into the boat and dropped on a middle thwart.

"Dixie!" cried the Kid, in falsetto.

She wore a cap, and carried an oddly ladylike shopping bag.

"Where'd you come from?" growled Connor.

"I saw you start," said the girl, casually. "Come on—let's get away."

Connor stared at her; then turned back to his work. The boat struck the water and drifted rapidly away down-stream. Connor, roaring angrily at the Kid, got out an oar.

"What are you doing?" asked Miss Carmichael, very quietly.

"Going ashore," said Connor.

"Oh, come, Tex!" said she. "Use your head."

He looked sharply, inquiringly, doubtingly at her.

"You two better row straight down-stream as hard as you can," she added. "You can bet Tom Sung and that gang aren't going to show themselves at Kiu Kiang. They've stopped somewhere below here."

The Kid, who was nursing his hand, looked up; wrinkled his low forehead (he was hatless) and then softly whistled. Connor made no remark, but continued studying the girl with his one eye. Finally, with an effort at reasserting his authority, he growled—

"Take an oar, Jim!"

"But my hands! My God, that rope took all the——"

"Do you expect me to do the rowing, Jim?" said Miss Carmichael.

The Kid yielded then. The girl settled herself comfortably in the stern, looking back at the fire. Soon they were out of the circle of light.

Suddenly Connor drew in his oar; stowed it away.

"Dixie," he remarked, "you've made

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up your mind to go through with this business, eh?"

"Certainly," she replied.

"You'll have to come across if you want my help. I won't go it blind."

Miss Carmichael glanced back at the red glow in the sky, then out toward the slightly paling east.

"I'll tell you by sunrise," she said. "The thing won't keep much longer than that, anyhow. It'll have to be fairly quick work."

"All right," said Connor. "That's an agreement. Now I'm going to take a nap. This current's taking us down fast enough. When you sight Tom's outfit, wake me up." With which he curled up in the bow, and soon was snoring.

THE Kid stowed his own oar, and crept to the girl's side.

"Careful!" she whispered. "If he should wake up." She extricated herself from an encircling arm. "Jim—sit still now! It's time you and I had an understanding. I need you, and I'm going to use you. I don't propose to have you all steamed up, either. You'll need all the nerve you've got. I'm not at all sure that you're big enough for what you've got to do. That's the difficulty."

"You promised, Dixie." He was still absurdly breathless. "You said it was a trade—if I'd stick to you, you'd stick to me!"

"Certainly. But it's during the next eight or ten hours that you're going to find out what sticking to me means."

"I guess I'll earn you, all right."

"I wonder if you have the courage?"

"By God, for you, Dixie——"

Her hand fell lightly on his; and her voice, very small and calm, broke in with—

"Supposing I told you to kill a man. Would you do it?"

She heard, felt, his breath stop. Then he whispered, with one swift glance at the sleeping Connor—

"If I say yes, Dixie, will you kiss me? Right now?"

She pressed her lips slightly; then replied, "No. Not yet. And you needn't kill anybody until I tell you to."

"Is it—is it—" his whisper was huskier—"is it—him, Dixie?" He was staring with less certainty now at Connor.

"No," said she, slowly, "nobody in particular. But anything may happen to-night, Jim. And we can't falter. Not now."

She let him press her hand during a brief moment; then made him resume his seat. And from behind lowered lids she watched him.

Once he came back, to ask, hoarsely—

"You said he was rough with you, Dix. Did he—did you and he—my God, if I thought that Tex had——"

She caught his shoulder and placed a hand over his mouth; held him thus while she said—

"If he catches you back here, Jim, he'll kill you. No fear! Now you go back there and show me that you can play cards. You're sitting in the biggest game of your life, Jim Watson."

He crept back; puzzled, something hurt. There was a sting in her voice. Could it be that the girlish Dixie was as coldblooded as that? Treating him like a child! Hadn't she any feelings? The question came around and around in his muddy brain, confused with frantic uprushes of jealousy against the big man who slept and snored in the bow. Hadn't she any feelings? She was excitingly desirable.

Just as a conquest, now; something to brag about.

II

IT WAS Dixie who found the soldiers, sitting in heated argument on the bank not a hundred yards below a big junk that lay moored to stakes in an eddy. She called sharply to Connor; they pulled straight in beside the other two boats.

Tom Sung came to the water's edge, a rifle, with set bayonet, in his hand. Connor stepped out, holding the boat. The Kid, with a furtive glance at the big yellow fighter and the abruptly silent shadowy group on the bank, cautiously got out an automatic pistol and held it beside him on the thwart.

Dixie said sharply, for Connor's ears—

"Put up that gun, Jim!"

The Kid obeyed.

She spoke then to Connor direct.

"Tell your man we want that junk," she said. "Get out these other boats and take it, quick. Then we'll start back upstream."

For a moment Connor was nonplussed. The girl's assumption of authority was complete. She had called his bluff; she had him now where he couldn't stop; even the slow-thinking Tom Sung felt her presence and turned abruptly from himself toward her.

But, though angered, Connor controlled himself. She meant, after all, business. Dixie wasn't a girl to make careless mistakes. She knew, none better, what any success, little or big, might be worth in risks run. So, speaking sharply, he gave his orders to Tom.

Quietly the twenty or more outlaw soldiers came down to the boats and pushed off. Rowing and paddling they crept up on the junk. A drowsy watchman peeped over at the rail, forward.

Then they were alongside. Catching at the mooring poles, the soldiers stepped out on the wide sponson that curved down, amidships, nearly to the water line. Quickly, rifles slung on backs but revolvers at their girdles and knives in their teeth, they went up the ropes hand over hand, their bare feet clinging monkey-like to the smooth side.

There were cries aboard now, and a confusion of running feet. The first soldier to get a leg over the rail came tumbling back with a split skull, bounding off the sponson into the water and sinking as he drifted away.

CONNOR and the Kid caught together at the sponson. Connor stepped out; and calling on a belated soldier to give him a back climbed laboriously, puffing but determined, up over the rail, pausing at the top only to call for the Kid to follow.

But that worthy hesitated, crouching, clutching at the boat painter. "I've got to hold the boat here!" he shouted back; but Connor had disappeared.

There was much noise up there now—shouts, groans, appalling screeches, shots, and that insistent pattering of feet.

Dixie, watching critically the crouching figure on the sponson—for the Kid was shivering and making odd little sounds, obviously caught in the acute physical distress into which extreme sudden fear will at times plunge a man—called abruptly—

"Jim—look up!"

A nearly naked man was lowering himself in a deliberate, gingerly manner down a mooring rope nearly overhead.

"Kill him, Jim!" Dixie added.

Singling out her clear voice from the tumult, the yellow man looked fearfully down.

The Kid, at the same moment, looked up; then, fumbling in a curiously absent way for his pistol, glanced back at Dixie.

"I'll hold the boat," said she. "Go on—kill him!"

She sat quietly, one thin arm reached out to the nearest mooring pole, looking steadily up.

The Kid, nerving himself, suddenly burst into a storm of wild oaths and shot three times into the body above him. At the first shot the man slipped down a little way.

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"Push him off!" Dixie cried sharply. "I don't want him falling into the boat."

He was shooting again; and then with an effort diverted the falling body.

Dixie got up, and stood steadying herself in the gently rocking boat; and the Kid, quite out of breath now, and muttering, as he fondled the hot pistol, "Well, I did it, didn't I? I did what you said!"—found in her eyes, shining through the dusk of early dawn, a bright white light that was, to him, disconcerting and yet profoundly thrilling. He shivered again as he felt the spell of her strange genius. What a woman, he was thinking again, but wildly, madly now, to conquer.

And she was saying—

"I guess your nerve's all right."

Other shining yellow bodies were tumbling over the side and floating away.

"Help me up there, Jim!" she commanded. "Never mind tying the boat—let it go! It's only a giveaway. Quick—give me a hand!"

She was beside him on the sponson. He clasped her in his arms; but she slapped him sharply.

"Keep your head!" she commanded. "Put me up there!" He lifted her high; until she could kneel, then stand, on his shoulder. She went over the rail as lightly as a boy. She found the soldiers in small groups cornering one or another of the crew, torturing and hacking at them with bayonets and knives, and during a brief moment looked on with a curious keen interest. The master, or lao-pan, crouched, whimpering, on the poop. She saw Connor standing by the mast, just above the well where were huddled the survivors among the crew (their number surprisingly large); Connor was panting, revolver in hand, and scowling about him.

Dixie stepped to his side.

"You've got to save enough of this crew to work the boat up the river, Tex," she remarked.

"I'm saving enough of 'em," he replied gruffly. "We've only killed a dozen or so. There was more'n a hundred." And then he shouted.

The heavily evil-looking Tom Sung reluctantly detached himself from one of the groups and came over, wiping his bayonet casually on his sleeve. Him Connor roughly ordered to gather his men together and make ready to get under way. To the Kid, who came awkwardly over the rail just then, Connor gave merely a glance. Then to Dixie he said—

"Come up here!"

HE LED the way up the steps with the carven hand-rail to the poop; gave the lao-pan a careless kick; stepped around the steersman's pit and out astern on the high projecting gallery.

"Now," he said, fixing his one eye on her, "where's this place?"

She turned away to the pots of flowers that stood closely spaced just within the elaborate woodwork of the railing. There were chrysanthemums, white, yellow and Indian red; highly cultivated double dahlias; red lotus blossoms; and tuberoses that filled the fresh morning air with their heavy perfume.

"Well?" Connor added, explosively.

"I said I'd tell you by sunrise, Tex," she said, coolly pleasant; and hummed, very softly, a music-hall tune, bending over a spreading lotus blossom with every appearance of ingenuous girlish interest. After a moment, she went on: "The thing now is to get this boat up the river as fast as it will go."

"Where to?" He was controlling his voice, but his face, usually expressionless, was brutally clouded. "Push me just a little farther, Dix, and you'll go overboard. And there won't be any flowers at the funeral. By God, I'm not sure I wouldn't enjoy it. You got me into this business! Now if you——"

"Better control yourself, Tex," said she, straightening up before him. "I may have got you in, but it's a real job now. You've got to go through. And you're going to need me. The place is a few miles this side of a town called Huang Chow, on the north bank."

"Beyond Hankow?"

"No, below. It's only a matter of hours getting up there, if you'll just get this junk started."

"How'll we know it when we get there?"

"All we've got to do is ask a native, anywhere along the bank, where T'ang Chi T'ung lives—his old home."

"Who's he?"

"The Viceroy of Nanking. Why don't you use that eye of yours once in a while, Tex—look around you a little?"

SLOWLY his mind, so quick at the vicious games of his own race, picked up the related facts. His face relaxed, as he thought, into the familiar wooden expression.

"You're sure the stones are there?" he asked quietly now.

She nodded, hummed again; caressed the flowers.

"All right, Dix," he said, then, as he turned to go forward, "that sounds square enough. I guess I can handle it all right. And I'll see that you get your share all hunky dory."

"What are you figuring my share to be?" she asked, glancing casually up from a lotus blossom.

"Oh," he cried without hesitation, almost gaily, "you and I aren't going to have any trouble about that."

He went then; and she lingered among the flowers.

From beyond the long deck-house came shouts and wailing. The great sweeps were gotten overside. The mooring poles were hoisted out and lashed along the sponsons. The clumsy craft swung out into the river and moved slowly forward.

At the sound of a hasty light step Dixie looked up into the haggard gray face of the Kid.

"What was it?" he whispered, glancing fearfully behind him. "Wha'd he say to you?"

She dropped her eyes; turned away.

"Quick! Tell me, or by God, I'll——"

She threw up a frail white hand.

"Not now, Jim!"

"When?"

"He'll have to sleep. There's work ahead."

"If you think I can sleep——"

"I can't either, Jim. It's dreadful. But I'm going to tell you everything. You have a right to know. Wait till we're past the steamer. We'd better get below now anyhow. We mustn't be seen. If we aren't, they'll never suspect this junk.

Then make sure he's asleep and come up here. I'll be waiting."

III

THE Kid brought Dixie's breakfast of rice and eggs and tea to the gallery.

"The cook was only wounded a little," he explained. "Tom's got him working now."

Dixie was stretched out in a Canton chair of green rushes over a bamboo frame, her head close to the tuberoses. Now and again she drew in deeply the rich odor. And beyond the fringe of flowers and the carven railing she could see the river. Junks moved slowly by, sliding down with the current—somber seagoing craft out of Tientsin and Cheefoo and Swatow and even Canton, with large straw fender-mats hung over the side and as many as five masts of various heights tipping in various directions. By a village were clustered open sampans, and picturesque slipper-boats with their coverings of arched matting. The small boats of the fishermen with suspended nets or with roosting, crowding cormorants, clustered here and there along the channel-way. Everywhere farmers and their coolies were at work in the fields. A family—father, mother, boys and girls—worked tirelessly with their feet a large irrigating wheel at the water's edge.

The Kid seated himself on the deck and mournfully looked on while she ate. Perversely she delayed her narrative, playing with time and life. In her oblique way she was happy, exercising her gift for gambling on a scale new in her experience. Indeed, for the thrill she now experienced, Dixie Carmichael would have paid almost any price. Life itself—the mere existing—she held almost as cheaply as do the Chinese. Deliberately, with nerves steady as steel instruments, she finished her simple breakfast and then put the bowls aside on the deck.

Lying back, averting her face, gazing off down the river, she began the narrative that she had framed within the hour. Her manner, calm at first, soon offered evidence of deeply suppressed emotion. Her voice exhibited the first unsteadiness the Kid had ever heard in it. She drew

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Archibald could not be expected to know that Friday was my wife's "At Home" day.

Beware of the Dog!

By George Robey

George Robey is to English theatregoers what a comedian-humorist compounded of George M. Cohan, Charlie Chaplin, Joe Weber and Lew Fields, with a dash of Irvin Cobb, would be to us. He is funny both "on and off," and popular with the reading public by reason of several humorous books, including "My Rest Cure," which was a great hit over here. Another characteristic specimen of George Robey's deft fun called "A Special Effort" will appear later.

MY WIFE has just made a remark which once again goes to prove how little even those nearest and dearest to us really know us.

It was apropos of some trifle of shopping I had undertaken to do for her.

"Now, mind, George," she said, "and don't let them give you a stale one. Be sure and smell it before you let them wrap it up."

"My dear, what do you take me for?" I replied. "Of course I shall smell it."

"Well," said my wife, "I thought I'd better remind you. You're so easily imposed upon."

Easily imposed upon! Now, if there is one thing that I am not, it is that.

Naturally, I asked my wife what she meant.

She said she meant that I was always being done.

Now, this is absolutely ridiculous. I am remarkably wide awake. To do me is practically an impossibility.

"Can you remember a single occasion on which I have been done?" I asked my wife with some acerbity.

"Well," she replied, "what about that dog you paid twenty guineas for?"

"Our bulldog? Archibald?"

"Bulldog!" said my wife. I can not reproduce her tone.

"He *was* a bulldog, though perhaps he was a little large," I told her. "Please don't let us begin *that* argument all over again. Archibald was an extremely valuable dog. Twenty guineas was cheap."

"He cost us a good deal more than that, didn't he?" said my wife.

"That is entirely beside the point," I returned. "He was a valuable dog, and to say I was 'done' because I paid twenty guineas for him is ridiculous."

"Then you consider Archibald was a success?" inquired my wife with sarcastic emphasis.

"Archibald would have been a success," I retorted, "if only you had given him time. Rome was not built in a day."

"No, but I daresay Archibald would have destroyed it in a day," returned my wife. Which shows how women exaggerate and how impossible it is to keep them to the point.

The point, in this case, is that Archibald was *not* given time. He was not given a chance. He was an uncommon dog and he should have been treated as such, instead of being expected to conform to the ordinary canons of canine behavior.

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That was the mistake everybody made. The man who sold him to me as a puppy impressed this upon me: He said that Archibald must not be regarded as an ordinary dog; that he had a very remarkable pedigree.

I reminded my wife of this.

"If you remember," I said, "the man told me that Archibald's father was more like a human being than a dog."

"Yes, that ought to have warned you," she replied.

I rather fancy my wife feels a little bitter about Archibald because, in a dim sort of way, she realizes that she never properly understood him. He baffled her. Even as a puppy he baffled her.

She could never understand, for instance, why Archibald refused to play with the indestructible ball and the untearable policeman she bought for him; why he preferred the drawing-room furniture that made beautiful tearing noises, and the pink satin quilt in the spare bedroom that produced a whole lot of white fluff when you really got your teeth into it—lovely feathery fluff that you could chase and bark at because it was alive.

Neither could my wife understand why Archibald bit our youngest offspring, Horatio Bottomley Haig. And yet it was the most natural thing in the world.

Horatio Bottomley Haig had no sense of right and wrong. Archibald had. Yet Horatio Bottomley Haig was far older than Archibald. Horatio Bottomley Haig had had his eyes wide open in a sinful world for ten whole months, while Archibald could hardly count as many weeks.

Horatio Bottomley Haig, crawling about the nursery floor, had no business with what rightfully belonged to Archibald. He had toys of his own in plenty. He should not have grabbed the dead mole that Archibald had brought in for himself from the garden. It was Archibald's property. But Horatio Bottomley Haig grabbed it and stuck to it.

Quite naturally, Archibald bit him. It was his only means of resenting an outrage. Therefore he bit. He bit Horatio Bottomley Haig in the calf of one stout leg. The most harmless and reasonable place to bite a baby.

I have, on a previous occasion, remarked upon the power of Horatio Bottomley Haig's lungs. But my wife will never realize that the loudness of his shrieks is no indication of the extent of his sufferings.

THEREFORE when Archibald bit Horatio Bottomley Haig my wife immediately concluded that the child would die. And when the child did not die and the bite healed up in a couple of days, she was convinced that, some time or other, Horatio Bottomley Haig would develop hydrophobia.

Though I say it of my own son, I must say it: Horatio Bottomley Haig has been a trying infant. My wife now attributes this entirely to the bite he received from Archibald. His frequent outbursts of temper she diagnoses as hydrophobic in character. When I remind her of the ten stormy months that preceded the bite, she remarks darkly, "Ah! *That* was different!"

I am, of course, anxious to shield my wife from blame as far as I can, but, in fairness to Archibald, I am obliged to set this down because it proves that, from the outset, my wife was prejudiced against the dog and contributed largely to the warping of his nature.

At first she insisted that Archibald must be destroyed; that we could not risk having a dangerous animal like that about the place.

I reasoned with her. I pointed out that Archibald was only a puppy and meant no harm; that Horatio Bottomley Haig would, in time, learn to respect other people's property, and that he and Archibald would come to be the best of friends. Meanwhile, I undertook to keep Archibald out of the nursery.

My wife's unreasonable attitude toward Archibald led to a considerable coolness between us.

THE other children would, no doubt, have made a pet of Archibald, but their mother forbade them to play with him. She even refused to remain in the same room with the dog.

Archibald felt all this very keenly. He had a sensitive, somewhat morbid, temperament. There is little doubt that the slight inflicted upon him by my wife embittered him and tended to the warping of a generous and affectionate nature.

That he was generous and affectionate he proved by his treatment of the twins. Though they were the sisters of Horatio Bottomley Haig, Archibald would have been their friend if only they had let him. Here, again, lack of sympathy and understanding was the cause of the dog's ruin.

The twins did not understand that when Archibald leaped upon them and knocked them down he was only trying to play with them. It was not his intention that Mabel's head should strike the scraper; and when he rolled Ethel over on the gravel he did not really mean to flatten her face.

As a matter of fact, Mabel received merely a slight scalp wound and the doctor assured my wife that Ethel would not be permanently disfigured. Yet my wife disliked Archibald more than ever after this, and the twins shrieked loudly whenever the poor animal ventured to approach them.

I am sorry to say that my daughter Emma also repulsed Archibald's innocent advances. And this simply because the puppy inadvertently upset a bucket of green paint that had been left upon the veranda.

It was no fault of his that Emma happened to be sitting below. Naturally, the paint streamed down upon her head and Emma had green tints in her hair and smelt of turpentine for several months.

"The point is," I said to my wife, "who left the bucket on the veranda."

"The point is," replied my wife, "who is going to poison that dog."

To do my wife justice, I believe she actually regarded Archibald as a danger to the community.

I pointed out to her that Archibald was not a vicious dog. He was merely full of the joy of life.

"Then, mark my words," said she; "Archibald's joy of life will be the death of somebody."

Of course I don't deny that Archibald was destructive. All puppies are destructive. Only Archibald, being an unusually big puppy, had, of course, unusual powers of destruction.

I don't deny that I was put out when Archibald bit the head of my Epstein Venus, and also when he ate a portion of my antique lacquer cabinet. But I told myself that, after all, Archibald was a growing dog and naturally had a hearty appetite.

I sent for Cook and inquired whether Archibald was being kept short of food.

"Short of food!" snapped Cook. "Why, God help that dog, you'd think he was a mastiff, the amount he eats. He's got a stummick like the widow's cruse, nothing seems to satisfy it."

Somewhat baffled by this biblical analogy, and still doubtful whether Archibald was being adequately nourished, I thanked Cook and determined secretly to supplement the dog's rations.

For some days I fed Archibald furtively on sausage-rolls, sardines and meat pies privately purchased. But this régime appeared not to agree with Archibald, and my wife declared that if the dog was going to be sick every day on top of everything else it was more than she could stand, and either she or Archibald would have to leave the house.

Of course I could not bear the thought of parting from my wife. Therefore I left off feeding Archibald.

The boys, George Junior, James and Charles, were inclined to like Archibald at first. He amused them.

He amused them when he bit Horatio Bottomley Haig. They roared with laughter when the twins went down like ninepins, and they shrieked with joy at the sight of Emma's hair.

But when Archibald had once or twice walked over George's photographic prints, carefully washed and spread upon the study floor to dry; when he had chewed up most of the paints in James's best paint-box, and ripped open the tires of Charles's new bicycle; when he was discovered sitting among the cabbages on top of their favorite rabbit (life regrettably extinct), the boys' attitude toward Archibald somehow changed.

THUS the unfortunate animal succeeded, through no fault of his own, in thoroughly alienating the affections of my household. I did what I could for the dog. I remonstrated with my family. I pointed out that Archibald was young; that exuberance of spirits is inevitable and undeniable in a young dog; that he would grow out of it, and that meanwhile such damage as he unwittingly inflicted ought to be regarded as reasonable wear and tear.

I begged them to have patience. I pointed out what a wonderful watchdog Archibald was going to be when he grew older. He would quickly lose these small faults of youth that now annoyed them and endear himself to all their hearts by his fidelity and courage.

But it was no use. My family having once made up their minds to dislike Archibald, went on disliking him.

They criticized his personal appearance and objected to his bark. They put a wrong construction on everything he did. Because he helped himself to food when he was hungry, they said he was a thief. How was Archibald to know that the rabbit pie was meant for our supper and not his? There was nothing about the pie to show for whom it was meant.

And there is nothing about a drawing-room to indicate, on the face of it, that no

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dead animal of any description whatever should be brought there.

Archibald could not be expected to know that Friday was my wife's "At Home" day, and that ladies of refinement can not drink tea and eat tomato sandwiches in the presence of a dead kitten.

The kitten, certainly, was extremely dead, but Archibald could not help that.

To be treated like a criminal by a roomful of refined females is an injustice that is bound to rankle in the mind of any dog.

I might say that Archibald's whole life was a series of injustices. It was enough to sour the disposition of any animal.

And I will not deny that Archibald's disposition did become completely soured. He grew morose and taciturn. Shunned by the members of my household and their friends, he in turn shunned them. Accustomed to have his advances repelled, he himself repelled such advances as were made to him by strangers that happened to come to the house.

It soon became second nature with Archibald to snap at every one who came near him except Cook and myself.

Only once, after Archibald had contracted this habit, did I observe him to make an exception to the rule; and that was in the case of a miserable-looking tramp who came to the side gate to ask for a drink of water.

I happened to be close by, pruning the pergola. My wife was looking on, telling me how it should be done.

Archibald came dashing across the lawn toward the tramp, barking furiously, and plowing up the fuchsia-bed *en route*. To our astonishment, instead of attacking the man, he sidled up to him and licked his hand.

"HOW extraordinary!" I exclaimed. "Why, Archibald never does that to anybody but me!"

"P'raps he takes him for you," replied my wife. Then she looked at me thoughtfully. "Though, of course, he's better dressed than you," she added.

"This is practically the country," I reminded her with some asperity, "and I dislike being overdressed. Anyway, I am glad to see that Archibald is not a snob. A dog has no stupid prejudices. He has instinct, which is far better. His instinct draws him toward me and toward that tramp. Depend upon it, that man has a heart of gold."

My wife made no reply, but something told me that the shot had gone home.

It was shortly after this that I noticed a slight change in my wife's attitude toward Archibald. She took more notice of him. She became more tolerant of his shortcomings. I even overheard her giving directions to Cook on the subject of Archibald's dinner. Cook was to be sure and give Archibald plenty, especially meat—good red meat, said my wife.

The reason of this change of front was not far to seek: An epidemic of burglaries had broken out in our suburb. Archibald's value went up accordingly. A bulldog is the finest burglary insurance in the world.

But the improvement in Archibald's social status came too late to affect the poor dog's character. This was now definitely set in its misanthropic mold and nothing could change it.

Archibald rejected my wife's overtures with scorn. He continued to snarl forbiddingly at all who came near him, and those bold enough to attempt to pat him on the back never did so a second time.

I was a little sorry for my wife, Archibald snubbed her so severely. At the same time I could not help feeling it served her right. But I tried to console her in a tactful manner. I pointed out to her that Archibald's misanthropy made him all the more desirable as a watch-dog. Since he resented the presence even of those most familiar to him, he would certainly allow no malefactor to approach our domicile unchallenged.

"Archibald," I assured her, "would get his teeth into any one who tried to do any burgling here."

And so, thanks to Archibald, we slept soundly o' nights, knowing that my Queen Anne silver, my priceless collection of snuff-bottles and my wife's trinkets were safe in the care of the faithful hound.

It was with a slight shock of surprise, therefore, that I was awakened in the small hours one morning by a scream from my wife and a hand on my face. The hand, too, was my wife's. When I had removed it and, with my customary alertness of mind, switched on the electric light, I discovered the cause of her excitement. A muffled stranger was bending over the dressing-table in the act of pocketing my wife's nine-hundred-guinea pearl necklace.

It was sheer astonishment at this unexpected sight that prevented my leaping out of bed and grappling with the intruder in my characteristic manner.

Those who know me know that I have a swift way with burglars and others. I can run after, or away from, as the case may be, faster than any man living. But when surprise holds me spellbound, I can be as motionless as the best of them.

This, then, was one of my motionless moments.

The burglar, no doubt recognizing at a glance that in me he had no ordinary opponent to deal with, made for the door.

It was then I observed that he was not alone: *He was accompanied by Archibald*—a tail-wagging, hand-licking Archibald—who, with scarcely a glance in my direction, complacently followed the burglar out of the room.

IS IT to be wondered at that I sat there, spellbound with surprise, for some moments longer? I heard the voice of my wife as in a dream, commanding me to catch the thief, to make haste and rescue her pearls.

Then I realized that my wife was making a fairly successful effort to push me out of bed. It was this that caused me to pull myself together. I resisted her efforts with firmness and courage.

Women are no use in moments of crisis. What was the good, I asked her, of chasing an armed and desperate ruffian whom even a dog like Archibald had found it wiser to propitiate?

This argument was so irrefutable that my wife made no direct reply. Instead, she began to scream for help. There came answering screams from overhead, as the maids woke up and caught the alarm. Then followed hurried footsteps, and Cook, Jenkins and Tweeny, in full dishabille, burst into the room.

Here let me delay my narrative for a moment in order to mention that this affair of the burglar incidentally led to a regrettable discovery on the part of my wife: The discovery that Tweeny had, for many months, been leading a double life. *Tweeny had had her hair bobbed.* Tweeny, who had always pretended to respect my wife's prejudice against domestics with bobbed heads, had deceived her. By means of innumerable hairpins and an artful disposal of caps, she contrived

Archibald rejected my wife's overtures with scorn

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Instead of attacking the man he sidled up to him and licked his hand.

to convey the illusion of a normal, if scanty, coiffure.

Thus while appearing, to the benevolent yet searching eyes of my wife, as an ordinary demure and sober-minded young woman, Tweeny was able to throw off this mask of demureness and sobriety at will, and to reveal herself, among her own boon companions, as the reckless, dashing Bohemian she really was.

But I digress. Let me resume the action of the story.

The frivolous, bobbed head of Tweeny, the unsophisticated, curl-paper-covered scalp of Cook, and even the elegant cranium of Perkins, discreetly circleted by the latest device in wavers, are, after all, mere accidentals in a night full of greater surprises.

George Junior, James and Charles had by this time been awakened, and came rushing in upon us, while Horatio Bottomley Haig lifted up his voice from the adjoining nursery. Emma and the Twins, it afterward appeared, slept peacefully through everything.

THE womenfolk clung to me in terror, so that it was with difficulty I struggled into slippers and a dressing-gown the while I tried to calm their fears.

Suddenly, above the general clamor of Horatio Bottomley Haig, there rose a canine yelping from below, then the cry of a man in pain, a succession of cries, of yelpings and barkings—the unmistakable barkings of Archibald—of Archibald, angry, furious, yet, it seemed, exultant.

A light began to dawn upon me:

Archibald had turned upon the burglar, had attacked him, was holding him fast.

THE faithful creature, no doubt, had known all the time what he was doing. He had merely been awaiting the psychological moment when he might catch the malefactor most effectually. That Archibald *had* caught him the wretch's cries and curses plainly testified.

I turned triumphantly toward my wife.

"*Now* do you understand why I waited?" I said.

I gently disengaged the arm with which Cook was still clasping my waist.

"On no account follow me," I enjoined the womenfolk. "Stay where you are with the children."

It had flashed across my mind that perhaps the sight that would greet us down below would be more than they could stand.

Who knows what might not have happened?

Maybe Archibald, in his zeal and just indignation, had mauled the ruffian not a little.

A mangled burglar, I reflected, is no fit spectacle for weak, hysterical females. It might scarcely be a pleasant sight even for a man of my caliber.

But the sight that actually met my gaze was far worse than I had expected.

Archibald had done his work very thoroughly.

Writhing, groaning and giving vent to horrid threats, his captive lay upon the ground, Archibald's fangs embedded in one leg, from which blood was flowing freely.

At sight of the man I could not help uttering a cry of horror.

I called to Archibald to come off. He took no notice. I shouted, I commanded, to no avail. Archibald had got his teeth into the man and meant to keep them there.

In desperation I reached for my whip. I thrashed Archibald within an inch of his life. Not till then did he begin to realize what was required of him.

HE GAZED reproachfully upon me. Slowly and reluctantly he withdrew his teeth.

His victim sat up at last.

"This'll cost you something, sir," as he swallowed the tumblerful of neat brandy I held out to him.

He was right.

The burglar had disappeared. So had the pearl necklace and the snuff-boxes and several hundred dollars' worth of miscellaneous property.

Archibald had not caught the burglar.

He had caught the policeman who came after the burglar.

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"You'll have to carry me down-stairs and put me in," she reminded him. "I can't step on my foot yet."

I'll Show You *the* Town

By Elmer Davis

IV

WHAT'S HAPPENED

MY SERIOUS plan to devote the summer vacation to a book on Apartment-House Life in Ancient Rome, which will secure me a full professorship in the Latin Department, is broken into by a number of annoying circumstances.

I am invited to address a convention of a Society for the Segregation of the Socially Inefficient at a fashionable summer hotel. This would afford a not unpleasant week-end were it not that the president of my home college, which my father headed before him, comes to town in distress and begs me to keep a protective eye on a certain lady, wealthy widow of an old benefactor of the college, who is going to the convention and whose person or money, of such possible usefulness to my alma mater, might fall victim to some unscrupulous fortune-hunter among the uplifters at the convention.

At the same time—and in accord with the same unfortunate reputation which I suffer of being a safe chaperon for girls or women, young or old, whose friends or husbands are too busy to bother with them—Cousin Edith hands over to me, to be entertained, a young million-heiress from the West, unused to the ways of the city. I meet Mrs. Clevenger, the widow, and Hazel Deming, the heiress, and do my best to show them both the town.

Mrs. Clevenger, it appears, needs a great deal of showing, and Hazel a little restraint.

Between the two my Latin treatise suffers woefully, and in my desire to fully perform my duties as chaperon to both and still perserve my "safe" reputation, I find myself involved in rather awkward complications. When Lucile, leaving her uncongenial husband, comes to me without funds and for a few nights homeless, my situation becomes excessively embarrassing, though not altogether unpleasant. Hazel Deming, fortunately, does not misunderstand my giving Lucile the use of my apartment overnight, and further shows a delightful sympathy by kidnaping me from the Conference for a tête-à-tête up the river when my speech is due, so that I will not ruin my academic career by giving vent to my indiscreet thoughts about the gathering. This again proves to be not as unpleasant as it might seem.

Chapter Twelve *(Continued)*

SHE was silent for a while, looking out over the river.

"Yes," she said at last. "That's what I came for; and I was beginning to be afraid that just because I had a good deal of money, and had to be taken care of by kind friends like Mrs. Torrey, I'd never get a chance."

"You will have the chance," I promised. "Though we'd better not tell Edith if we go on any slumming trips. Her appreciation is limited."

"We won't tell her," Hazel laughed, "Nor Sarah."

I wondered if she felt, as I did, that the charm of our party had been disturbed by these unlucky afterthoughts. We'd been getting along beautifully, and now suddenly we stumbled over the remembrance of these two strong-minded women, who wanted us to do things so different from the things we wanted to do. Why did it have to be so? Why couldn't they let us alone?

The answer, of course, was simple enough. I was a man and Hazel was a woman; I was poor and she was rich; outsiders naturally couldn't understand that these circumstances were merely incidental to our sympathies and understandings. But it was annoying and unreasonable; there were so many harmless things both of us would like to do, that would find no favor at all in the eyes of Edith and Sarah.

"Everything you do," I said pettishly, "seems to be overshadowed by Sarah. You hire the woman, don't you? Why don't you get rid of her?"

"Oh, I have to have somebody. She's a nuisance, but she does it all with the

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best of intentions. And I suppose she's good for me, in a way. You see, I'm an—orphan; I haven't anybody to tell me I can't do anything; and I've money enough to do whatever I want. I'd find everything pretty easy if it weren't for Sarah. Maybe too easy. Getting around her keeps my wits sharpened. I like it. Besides, she's funny."

"Then she will be got around quite a good deal this summer," I predicted. "I want to take you to—to everything."

"There will be other obstacles than Sarah," said Hazel. "I may not have so much time as you think. Kenneth wirelessed that he's already accepted some invitations at Newport and Lenox, for himself and Sarah and me."

"The gentleman seems rather officious," I observed. "What right has he——"

"Well, for one thing, I'm engaged to marry him."

"Oh!" I said. "The devil!"

"Not at all. He's very nice. I want you to meet him, of course; I know he'd like you— I mean, I know you'd like him—I—oh, you know what I mean."

I didn't know what she meant, and didn't care, though I was rather surprised to find that apparently she didn't know. But it seemed to have taken a good deal of the edge off our summer. And, for that matter, off our evening. I wasn't sorry when she looked at her wrist watch and said it was time to go back.

"I suppose Sarah and I ought to stay overnight," she suggested. "It will be past midnight when we get back to Maplecrest. Won't she be mad! And just because she'll be so mad, I think I'll drive back in town and let her cool off. It's a good night for cooling off."

There was no doubt about that. I don't know what Hazel was thinking about during our long silent drive back to the inn, but I was growing positively frigid with thoughts about the strong-armed and strong-hearted Kenneth France. And Sarah; and Edith. And Agnes.

TO-NIGHT would have been the golden opportunity, and I had wasted it with Kenneth France's fiancée—wasted it, for Agnes would almost certainly have gone to bed by the time we arrived. There was just a chance that she hadn't; I might have awakened a taste for late hours along with other things; and if she hadn't, I resolved that nothing should stand between me and a women's dormitory, a memorial gateway, and a quarter of a million on the endowment fund. I had damaged my prospects enough already, by temporizing, by lack of courage, by wasting time with other girls. To-night, or to-morrow if I could not find her to-night, I would be firm. No longer would I shrink from kissing her, if occasion required; and I began to find myself wishing that occasion would require it. After all, she was about nine times better looking than Hazel, or Lucile, or anybody else I'd seen in years. I'd stayed away from her long enough to let our feelings crystallize; and hereafter I would trust to my feelings and not to cold calculation. To think that for four whole days I'd dodged an intimate talk with this magnificent creature; that I'd thought of her only as somebody who might give money to Wyndham College, instead of as a beautiful woman whose soul I personally, unaided, had discovered. I had broken through the thorny barrier and awakened Princess Charming; and if I continued to regard her as the possible provider of a memorial gateway, instead of a personality, I—well, I belonged at the conference on the segregation of the socially inefficient.

So we came back to an inn that was almost dark; though there were a few lights here and there, and we heard voices on the veranda. And as we drove up into the pillared entrance we found Sarah waiting on the doorstep. She had been there, I gathered, for at least five hours; and she proceeded to uncork some bottled remarks of a nature so vitriolic that Hazel begged me to go away and let her fight it out with Sarah alone. So I went away, though not before I had been accused of kidnaping; which, in the circumstances, was manifestly unfair.

Chapter Thirteen

The Party

MOST of our delegates had gone to bed, so as to be up in time to pursue the premature worm; but a few people were still about the lobby. And in a big easy chair beside a pillar, in a distant corner of the room, Agnes was knitting and waiting.

She had dressed for an occasion—overdressed and underdressed, in a rather startling evening gown with a cobwebby pink scarf tossed over her white shoulders. I strode across the lobby full of determination, and as I approached she laid aside her knitting and turned her cold blue eyes upon me.

"Where have you been?"

The silver cord was loosed, and the golden bowl was broken. She was as enchantingly beautiful as ever; she looked extraordinarily kissable; but she was too previous. Where I had been was none of her business, yet. She evidently expected some kind of a crisis this evening; and that question at that particular moment seemed to me the mark of a born, incurable where-have-you-been-er. Agnes was not for me.

But if she was not for me, she might be—must be—for Wyndham College. I'd failed in about everything else, but I'd have to keep my promise to Goodhue.

"Never mind that," I said firmly. "The point is not where I have been, but where I have come back to."

"Your emotions appear to have disarranged your grammar," she observed.

"Mrs. Clevenger, I have no emotions. At least—I thought a moment ago I had none——"

"All this is about five hours late," said Agnes. "The point is not only where you have been but how long you have been there."

"I have been fulfilling a family obligation," I assured her, "a duty to my cousin, Mrs. Torrey. She asked me to look after this little friend of hers, Miss Deming."

"Ah! This sounds more like the truth. I was told that you had been overcome by the heat. Miss Spivey and I were much agitated; we inquired of the house physician. He knew nothing of it. We asked the manager of the hotel; we sent a bellboy to your room. He—he climbed over the transom. You were not there. And you admit that to-night, when you were to have delivered your address—to-night of all nights—you were with this——"

"I might have known," I said patiently, "that the truth would be misunderstood. Most men, I suppose, would have tried to lie out of it. But I do not intend to lie to you, Mrs. Clevenger. This girl is young and—and headstrong. Stubborn. Mrs. Torrey charged me particularly to look after her and see that she didn't do anything foolish.

"To-night I found that she had slipped away from her chaperon, who was very much disturbed about it——"

"I know she was," said Agnes. "I heard her. She said some very unkind things about you."

"I can't help what she said, or what you heard. I happened to learn that this girl had slipped away from her chaperon to drive up the river for dinner at some roadhouse, with a—a young fellow who had been amusing her. My cousin, Mrs. Torrey, had been especially afraid of something like that. I remembered her admonitions. I drove up the river myself, in an unusually fast car; and I brought her back. I regret having had to leave you without a word—I regret my inability to deliver my address to the conference; but I had promised my cousin to look after her. And she has now gone back to New York, with her chaperon.

"There, Mrs. Clevenger, you have the truth. I admit that it does not present a well-constructed, plausible story. That is one of the risks I have had to assume in fulfilling my promise to my cousin. Other men, I suppose, would have followed the line of their own inclinations and stayed here to address the conference, regardless of the hazards which this young girl might have experienced. I could not. Other men, had they gone out as I did, would have entertained you with some elaborate falsehood that would have commanded your confidence. I could not; I must take the risk of your displeasure. I am a Deupree, and I have told the truth."

And every word of it was literally true; but Grandfather Athanasius Deupree must have turned over in his grave and thumped three times on the lid of his coffin. However, he had got me into this; he founded Wyndham College.

AGNES thought it over, and as she thought it over the big clock on the stairs struck two.

"Heavens!" she cried. "How late it is. We are the only people up. This is all your fault."

"Let us continue the discussion in the morning," I proposed. "Will you have breakfast with me? I think I can convince you, not so much of my own truthfulness—a man who is in the right need not be disturbed if others misjudge him—but of my loyalty to—to your interests."

"I am breakfasting with Miss Spivey," said Agnes. "We're going in to New York on the nine-forty."

"But you're coming to my tea, of course. I've invited a number of people to meet you—very interesting people."

"Yes," she said, "I shall be there."

And I knew that all was not yet lost; that, indeed, all might be saved.

"Then I'd like to motor back to the conference with you afterward," I suggested.

"I may not return to the conference," Agnes informed me. "It is an extremely worth-while experience, of course, but I have a number of matters to attend to in New York. Business matters."

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I got no further, for the car rose up in front of us, the door swung back and here were Agnes and Emerine Spivey.

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"Then I hope you will dine with me on Wednesday," I proposed. "Remember, I've promised to show you the town."

"I'll think it over," she said. By this time a bell-boy who was going around and turning out the lights had reached our corner. He looked at us and apparently decided that we could do without the light; I wondered if the often-deferred psychological moment were not at hand. But just as darkness fell the Spivey woman appeared from somewhere with an armful of documents.

"Why, Mrs. Clevenger, I hardly expected to find you up so late."

"It is rather out of the ordinary," Agnes admitted. "But you are late, too, Miss Spivey."

"I've been preparing the program for the educational section," Miss Spivey explained. "It's terribly tiring work and I'm all exhausted. Shall we go up to our rooms, Mrs. Clevenger?"

Agnes left me with a reasonably gracious farewell, but my fears were coming back. That Spivey person had been preparing no program; she didn't even belong to the conference. She had been keeping watch over Agnes. But there would be evenings this week when she couldn't keep watch; and I eased myself to sleep with the complacent reflection that I was not entirely dead yet.

I was still in that amiable mood when Wyman and I went into town on the noon train. Wyman, too, had had enough of the conference; he was going to write something about it, and made some effort to get out of coming to tea. But I needed him—needed him so badly that I finally prevailed on him to come half an hour ahead of the rest of them. He had a reserve of small talk that would lubricate any emergency which might begin to creak; and this was no day to let things start creaking.

As soon as I left the train I telephoned up to the neighborhood pastry shop and ordered some things sent in; I'd have phoned to the corner florist, too, but I didn't know what kind of flowers Agnes and Hazel liked, and I knew if I ordered Lucile's preference she'd be sure to say something about them and upset the carefully arranged equilibrium of the occasion. I'd have to do something for Lucile this week; give her some introductions, at the very least; but I didn't know where she'd established herself, and there would be time for all that later. Meanwhile, I stopped down-town to buy a hat, and it was three o'clock when I finally reached the apartment-house.

THANKFUL that I didn't have to sneak up-stairs this time, I told Walter and Sadie that I was looking for some callers later on, and ascended in the elevator to set my house in order. I thought I noticed a smell of cigaret smoke as the key turned in the lock, but I wasn't prepared for what was waiting for me.

Lucile was curled up on the couch, in her yellow kimono.

"I'd like to get up," she said, "but I can't. Oh, Alec, I'm so glad to see you! It's been terribly lonesome."

"What's the matter?"

She thrust forward a slipperless foot, and I saw underneath the thin, distended stocking a huge white mass of bandages.

"Tripped over a rug yesterday morning and sprained my ankle. Isn't it horrid? I had to have a doctor come in and bandage it, and he said I might be able to hobble around by to-morrow. But now I can hardly touch it to the ground, even if I put all my weight on the other foot; and the only way I can get around is to put one knee on a chair and—and— Oh, it's such a bother!"

"It undoubtedly is," I agreed. "You can't use it at all?"

"I can't walk. I've just barely been able to get around the apartment; I've been on my back most of the time. I couldn't very well go to a hotel, could I?"

"I suppose not," I admitted. "But what are we going to do about my party?"

"Oh, I've attended to all that," she said calmly. "I hopped in with my knee on a chair and got the things off the dumb-waiter— See!"

I SAW. Over my typewriter-desk was spread my best table-cloth; and my silver teaset, the best cups, plates of sandwiches, little cakes and a box of Lucile's scented cigarets were all ready for the party. A teakettle was sizzling on the gas-stove in the kitchenette. I looked around my hermitage, and saw some other things that had escaped notice when I first came in. All the books that had overflowed from the shelves on to the floor were stacked like cordwood in the recess beside the kitchenette and half hidden under a wide-spread steamer rug. Something or other had been done to the curtains. Every vase and extra pitcher was filled with bright-red carnations, her sorority flower, which I suppose she'd ordered herself. Carelessly flung about on the table were two or three highly personal garments which she seemed to have been mending—garments of a strident and excessive pinkness. And above all there was discernible, even through the scent of the flowers, a subtle fragrance that meant feminine occupancy, and that couldn't possibly be aired out before five o'clock. My apartment had felt the home-maker's touch.

"Didn't I do pretty well for a lady with only one foot?" she demanded proudly. "Everything's ready for the party except my mending. I was a little slow with that, for I hadn't done anything for myself in the last six years; but I'll get it out of the way right now, and dress. Then let them come."

"Let them come?" I groaned. "With you here? How are we going to explain that?"

"Why, I supposed of course you could think up some way to make it look all right. You're always so clever."

"At this moment I feel anything but clever. Good Lord, Lucile! This party is designed to amuse Mrs. Clevenger so that she'll give that money to the college. You remember how strict she was—if she should see anything suspicious!"

"I don't see why you should insinuate that I look suspicious. Can't you say that you'd sublet your apartment to me, and that I was moving in next week and wanted to look it over beforehand?"

"People who sublet apartments don't come to look at them with sprained ankles that they can't walk on."

"Or that I was your sister, or something?"

"She knows that I haven't any sister, or anything."

"Or that I was the first one of the party to get here—that I mistook the hour, or something, and came early in my limousine——"

"I don't believe we could get away with it. If you were sour-faced and forty-five, almost any kind of story would get over, but as pretty as you are——"

"Who's coming? Anybody that knows me?"

"Not unless Mrs. Clevenger would remember you from your college days, and there isn't one chance in ten thousand of that. Mrs. Clevenger, and a woman friend of hers; an author from Greenwich Village; Hazel Deming, and perhaps her chaperon——"

"Who's Hazel Deming?" she demanded suspiciously. "Tell me something about her."

"In Heaven's name, Lucile! I haven't time to tell you about Hazel, or anybody else. Don't you understand? These people are coming here in an hour and a half. Look at this place! All those—those pink things will have to be picked up and packed up; everything of yours will have to be shoved into your suitcases and slipped out of sight. And even then, does this look like a bachelor apartment? It does not. It looks like a place where a woman lives. I might get away with that, but if my guests find a girl here with a hopelessly sprained ankle— Well!"

"It would be awful if gossip got out about us, wouldn't it?" she gasped. "Who is the man? Would he think——"

"Heavens, no. He wouldn't think anything; he knows I'm harmless. The person who would think is Agnes Clevenger. I've got to make a good impression on her. I'll have to get you out of the way somehow."

"Get me out of the way? Why, Alec Deupree! If—if that's the way you feel about me, why did you ever invite me to your apartment at all?"

"Because I never supposed you'd sprain your ankle."

"I suppose you'd like to send me to a—a rescue home, or something——"

"If you aren't well enough to go to a hotel in a taxicab," I said rather ungraciously, "we can call an ambulance and have you taken to a hospital."

The tears that had been hanging on her eyelashes let go at this, and began to roll down her cheeks.

"Before you came," she sobbed, "I was thinking how lovely you were to me—a perfect Bayard—and—and now you——"

THEN the floods came. She'd held in her tears all day yesterday when there was no one to appreciate them; and now she could hold them in no longer. Lucile had always had occasional need of a broad and hospitable shoulder on which to drop her discouraged head, and it was like old times to find my shoulder doing duty. And as I petted her slowly back to quiet I felt rather ashamed of myself. Only night before last we'd picked up our old friendship and found it almost as good as new after seven years, and already we were quarreling like a married couple. And it was my fault; I knew Lucile well enough to know she was never of much use in a crisis, and I ought to have made allowances for what she had gone through. To her, tired and hurt and discouraged, it might easily look

(*Continued on page 106*)

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Prose or Worse

by

Gridley Adams

(Holland, Michigan, Sentinel)

Twenty-five dollars reward. Any person who will give information leading to the arrest of the person or persons turning in a false alarm last Saturday evening will be given the above named reward. Several of our local firemen were taking their Saturday-night baths when the alarm was turned in and those were subjected to severe cold or pneumonia by this sudden call to duty.

An outrageous interruption of an ancient rite.

(Kingman, Arizona, Mineral Wealth)

Until further notice, the Commercial Hotel as a summer inducement will give one bath a week to all guests who pay their bill promptly at the end of the week. Regardless of the scarcity of water we want our guests to be comfortable.—R. E. STEVENS, Prop.

"Detour."

(Clinton, Wisconsin, Wasp)

It will be remembered by our citizens that the large warehouse of the L. L. Olds Seed Company was destroyed by fire a few years ago and has remained unoccupied ever since.

Why not rent it for a cow pasture?

(Lambertville, New Jersey, Beacon)

Miss Magdalen Young, of Ringoes, followed as maid-of-honor. She wore sea-foam green rosebuds and a picture hat of sea-foam green tulle.

I veni'd; I vidi'd; she vici'd!

(Ad of a St. Paul mule entrepreneur)

We know the kind you want, and will stand back of every mule we sell.

No kick to nothing, nowadays.

(Chicago Daily News)

For Sale—Hand pump; used for cleaning beer coils, including customers. Canal 5096.

Central, please give me the Canal!

(Chicago Daily News)

Lost—French bulldog; deaf; answers name Dick.

Quelque chien!

(Lexington, Kentucky, News)

One of the most superb affairs that the citizens of Lexington have witnessed for quite a long while, was brought to bear by the uniting in holy wedlock of Miss Mary Elizabeth Stewart and Mr. Louis Monroe Ford. At the beginning, the day was one of gloom, but late in the morning the clouds became scattered, and at the noon hour the sun peeped out and streamed through the windows of the old historic church, adding cheer and enthusiasm to the superb occasion. Each individual of the bridal party performed his or her part as perfectly as if guided by a guardian angel, and the entire performance was one of rare beauty, portraying all of the accuracy of a piece of well-oiled machinery.

Whereupon the sexton took off his jumper, and tolled the bell.

(St. Louis Times)

Farmer wants middle-aged woman, unincumbered, as wife; object matrimony. Address St. Louis *Times*.

If he keeps on he's liable to propose to her.

(Prof. Richards in his "Primer of Sanitation")

"Wash all wounds, and keep from biting insects."

What is *your* favorite insect?

DO YOU BELIEVE IN SIGNS?

In Waterloo, Iowa: "*For sale—Two loose geese.*" (*Liable to spoil the whole bunch*).

Ad in Detroit *Free-Press*: "*About to retire. Clothing one-half off.*"

In Muskogee, Oklahoma: "*Coming—Richard B. Harrison in the rôle of Damon and Pythias.*"

In Rockford City Hospital: "*No children allowed in the maternity ward.*"

In Pontiac, Michigan, Opera House: "*Take a step in the right direction. Adams, Undertaker.*"

In Grand Ridge, Illinois: "*Notice—The Republicans of the town of Farm Ridge will hold their annual cacus in the Opera House in Grand Ridge, on Saturday, the 20th, for the purpose of annommating the following offices: One Supervisor, One Road Commissioner, and any other business that may come up. By order of Commy.*"

In a Miami, Florida, theatre: "*Patrons are requested not to allow their dogs to follow them into the theater as they might start a fight and cause a panic.*"

In the window of The Fair Department Store, Chicago. "*Shaving soap for mugs.*"

(Montezuma, Indiana, Enterprise)

Mr. and Mrs. Ed Haines wish to express their heartfelt thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Bert Van Sickle, living in Leatherwood, for delivering and making us a present of a nice fat hen last Saturday for Sunday dinner, also some milk. May their shadows never grow less. If farmers and all others who read this that are able would follow Mr. and Mrs. Van Sickle's example their kindness would be appreciated as was theirs. We were not expecting the chicken and milk for nothing and offered to pay for them, but they would not accept anything.

Boy, please mail a copy of this EVERYBODY'S to Mr. and Mrs. Bert, telling them I like chicken, and that "Chicago" gets me.

(From a speech by the Lord Mayor of London)

That would be a crying evil to leave the poor people in the city without milk. It would be a wise thing if the corporation would take the bull by the horns and deal with the matter.

Boy, page Luther Burbank.

(Oak Park, Illinois, Oak Leaves)

Notice—Party on Home Avenue who called up and said they found my pocketbook, please give me their number again, as I lost it.—A. S. LIVERMORE.

Nobody home.

(Lowell, Massachusetts, Journal)

The County nurse, Miss Gowdy, gave an interesting talk emphasizing the fact that we should be more careful in spreading contagious diseases.

Sure, pick out your friends first.

(Great Falls, Montana, Tribune)

"Manning, desperately wounded, was taken from the I. W. W. hall to the hospital, where he died. The only post-mortem statement he made was that he did not know who shot him."

After his funeral the police expect to put him through the Third Degree.

(Ottumwa, Iowa, Courier)

Wanted—Married man to work on milk wagon. Must be neat, sober and industrious and a good mixer.

Whaddayermean, "a good mixer"?

(Palo Alto, Iowa, Reporter)

She had been visiting her sister there, but was called home by an accident that happened to her mother. The latter slipped and fell and injured her somewhat.

Ouch!

(Follett, Texas, Times)

The Wilson Drug Store has this week installed a new soda fountain, and when we just stand up and gaze round we realize that it is the nifftiest in this end of the Panhandle or just a little bit nobbier than anything there is between Wichita and Amarillo, we simply mean all that as it is about the nifftiest piece of that class of "machinery" that we have ever seen outside the city. It is a magnificent piece of niceness arranged out of Virginia marble, and when one partakes of effervescent beverages therefrom he'll simply stand and "rubber" at all the little mechanical stunts as though it was some great wonder. But then that's the way with Follett business folk—there is nothing too good for them as long as the jingle comes along.

An eighth cousin to the Colossus of Rhodes, Hanging Gardens, et al.

(Lipscomb, Texas, Lime Light)

On account of the weather being stormy and the little raindrops coming down the Darrouzett boys that were coming over to give our boys a go on the diamond Sunday did not show up for the reason that the game was postponed.

Well, you see it was this way—

(Lipscomb, Texas, Lime Light)

"Owing to one of the rigid rules that Miss Herber laid down in regard to chewing gum, the pupils presented her with a gum shower Monday. There was gum everywhere and the pupils enjoyed the novelty of the occasion as well as the unusualness in the extreme."

I should say, *on* the extreme.

(Plum Creek news in Pendleton, Kentucky, Reformer)

Mrs. Joe Fardo and son, Clisten, spent Monday with her sister, Mrs. Jake Montgomery.

Joe Fardo spent Monday with Mr. M. F. Webster.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Fardo and son, Clisten, had as their guests Thursday evening Misses Jennie, Jewel, Stella, Nellie and Elsie Gosney.

Miss Jewel Gosney spent Thursday night with her cousin, Elsie Gosney.

Mrs. Joe Fardo spent Sunday afternoon with Mrs. Ollie Webster.

Miss Elsie Gosney spent Saturday night and Sunday with Nellie Gosney.

Lon Gosney and daughter, Edith, spent Saturday with Mr. and Mrs. Henry Gosney and daughter, Jewel.

Mr. Dave Johns spent Saturday with his daughter, Mrs. Kate Gosney and family.

Maggie Bell Gosney spent Thursday with Elsie Gosney

Well, what *I* want to know is: where was Elsie on Wednesday night after the prayer meeting was over?

(Vermont Union Journal)

"The bride was dressed in filmy white, looking like a soft summer cloud. The groom was in conventional black; he wore white shirt, white vest and white gloves, which he removed during the ceremony."

These hot, summer-night weddings can be made so interesting.

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(Roseland Advertiser)

For rent—Room, cheap to single or double men only.

Why knock the other kind?

(Pulaski County, Indiana, Democrat)

Jerry Bostick Mondayed and Tuesdayed and part of Wednesdayed at Monon.

And he probably Sundaed at the drug store.

(Cairo, Illinois, Herald)

Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Glade, who have been spending a few days in Chicago, returned last night. They nearly froze to death, the temperature being ten below before bedtime Thursday night, in Chicago.

Evidently, they didn't bring their soapstone with them.

(Chatsworth, Illinois, Plain Dealer)

Owing to the large number of deaths and the further fact that there is so much sickness, we have been unable to secure many of the obituaries. If the relatives will kindly bring them to the *Plain Dealer* office we will cheerfully publish them.

Well, there are a few I could most cheerfully write.

(Oak Park Oak Leaves)

Ladies interested in the organization followed the marchers in automobiles. Each Elk was in the democratic and significant uniform, consisting of a white, soft felt hat, a jaunty bamboo cane, and purple-and-white streamers, the colors of the order.

The addition of streamers was truly democratic, wasn't it?

(New Orleans States)

Following an argument, I. B. Rennyson struck Dr. Hamlet Moore on the lawn.

Mower and Moore cruel.

(Peoria Star)

Wanted—Housekeeping in city or country by a single lady of middle age. Men of bad habits need not apply. Good reference required. Box —, Henry, Illinois.

One hundred to one she didn't get an answer.

Battle Creek Inquirer)

If it rains this evening, the social will be hell on Thursday evening.

Slippery grounds?

(Illinois State Journal)

Then she learned that the man she loved was the son of the man who had run away with one of her uncle's wives, and also with his money.

Ah! the money—she just couldn't forgive him for *that*.

(Milwaukee Railway System)

A. A. DeLeo, while walking with a young lady the other night, slipped on the icy pavement and sprained his arm between Grobel's corner and the crossing.

Usually a vulnerable spot.

(Taos, New Mexico, News)

Mrs. Alex Gusdorf again "poured tea on her spacious veranda" last Tuesday afternoon to a few friends.

Her stummy cake was simply delicious.

(West Chicago Press)

The employees of the Egan Construction Co. are making plans for a big picnic to be held next Sunday at the sewer purification plant near Jackson's Spring. The site is ideal for a picnic.

You'll never know what they've put in the potato salad.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN SIGNS?

In Ripon, Wisconsin: "*We stand behind everything we push.*"

In Tampa, Florida: "*Our lines of ladies' skirts displays the unusual.*"

Over an employment agency in Swift Current, Saskatchewan: "*This is the guy what hires the ginks.*"

In Portland, Maine: "*Unparagoned building sites for sale in this vicinity.*"

In the post-office at Republic, Michigan: "*Stamps for sale at cost.*"

In Beloit: "*Belle Mead Sweats in the Corner Drug Store.*"

In the street cars of Leavenworth: "*No dogs or hounds allowed in these cars.*" (Meaning loop-hounds and sofa-lizzards.)

In Baltimore: "*Charles Street Avenue Boulevard*" and "*Tonsorial Barber Shop.*"

(J. Ralph Pickell divulges his methods)

The method of producing that lecture may be of interest to you. When I had determined upon a subject and had outlined it in my own mind, I cut off communication with the outside world for a week. My meals were served to me in my room and I saw no one. The first copy which I wrote was the last copy. It was a finished product when the last word was written. Then I spent two solid weeks in absorbing it—not learning it by heart, but simply drinking it in and then letting it ooze out at the pores. Those who have heard me deliver it more than once have never heard the same thing twice. But I can fit it to any set of circumstances under which I am speaking. I can stop in the midst of it, throw in something irrelevant, and then pick up the thread again without mental suspense or distress. And the more I deliver it, the better it gets. Surely I have made myself clear on the subject of public speaking.

Gee, I'm all porespiration myself.

(Ad in Chicago Tribune)

"Lost, strayed, or stolen, Toy Boston Bull with four feet."

You couldn't possibly mistake him.

(Los Angeles Times)

Mrs. Dietrick of Detroit looked very fetching in a black and white sweater.

Aren't the mosquitoes fierce this summer?

(Buffalo Paper)

For sale cheap—Complete fishing outfit, including too good setter dogs.

But to catch dogfish you really need polecats and hook-worms.

(Pittsburg Press)

Secretary Daniels stood at the end of "No Man's Land," to all appearances bare except for here and there a few clumps of grass or hillocks of clay.

Josephus and his coat of camouflage.

(Greeley, Colorado, Tribune-Republican)

A baby girl arrived at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Smith last week. Mrs. Smith is in Ft. Collins.

Where was Harry?

(Postal Hotel, Atlanta, Rules and Regulations)

Women, drunkards and dogs not allowed in the hotel under any circumstances.

Speaking of Southern hospitality.

(Caruthersville, Missouri, Republican)

Her neck was broken by the fall, but she was otherwise uninjured. The remains were taken to Memphis.

And her early recovery is looked for.

(South Haven Tribune)

Arthur Boyce sang "Vive L'Amour" and after partaking of the most excellent menu provided, the company took a little recess while the table was being cleared of the debris.

A Michigan orgy.

(Marshalltown, Iowa, Times-Republican)

For Sale—Bedroom suit, single bed and buggy. Phone yellow 465.

Look for a wedding announcement soon.

(Columbus, Indiana, Republican)

WANTED—A colored girl for bell-boy at the St. Denis Hotel.

Hooks and eyes are cheaper than "buttons."

(Racine Journal-News)

On the heels of the railroad legislation came the war in Europe. This added fuel to the landslide.

Ouch, the flaming avalanche.

(Telegram sent to fond relatives)

Operation successful. Mabel doing fine. No danger of complete recovery.

If necessary we'll cut her again.

(Stevens Optical Company's House Organ)

Mrs. Oscar Burgess is convalescent as a result of an operation for tonsilitis. This is exceedingly annoying.

In fact, we hoped she never *would* come back.

(Want Ad)

HOME wanted for bride with built-in features, and room for two children; prefer one with furnace.

No store teeth for her.

(From Texas paper)

The scene in the public square of Temple, Texas, when the negro Stanley was burned, was spectacular.

Just impossible to conduct these little neighborly gatherings in a quiet manner.

(From an Illinois paper)

The coroner's jury sworn to inquire into the death of Matthew H. Voorhees, on oath, found that he came to his death with suicidal intent while his mind was temporarily deranged, right back of his house, in Spoon River.

He should have stayed on the front porch.

(Santa Rosa Press-Democrat)

The location of the bullets dispatched by Mrs. Phillips indicated that them shots were fired as Phillips was walking away from his wife.

Boy, bring me the physical geography.

(St. Louis Post-Dispatch)

Miss Mabel Wilber, in the leading soprano role of Daisy, the barmaid, later Little Boy Blue, sang well and wore several masculine costumes which showed her versatility.

Bet no one in *that* hay-stack was fast asleep.

(Springfield News-Record)

Found—Young foxhound, black. It may not be a foxhound but it's a hound of some kind. Inquire Kelley's Saloon.

Well, it's black, anyway.

A first class power, says General Wood, could sink our navy, in less than sixty days, perhaps sooner."

Boy, get me any old arithmetic.

(Eau Claire Leader)

For sale—Pair of broncho horses. Good weight, sound, broken. Owner in hospital. Address L. B. Schell.

Just ought to see the owner. He was a sight (nothing left but the Schell).

(Beatrice, Nebraska, Press)

Wanted—A horse to gather up rugs around town for its feed. Phone 773x.

That's what makes Nebraska horses so rugged.

(From the Want Ads)

Personal—Refined couple want to adopt infant.

Could refinement go higher?

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The Pirate of Park Avenue

By Lucian Cary

That dreams—even dreams about pirates, dreamed in a twentieth century New York apartment—have a way of coming true, and in the most unexpected fashion, is the small but encouraging truth Lucian Cary has put in this story. Another, called "The Dark Secret," by the same author, will follow soon.

THE Eliots lived in that queer jumble of smart shops and clothing factories, of new skyscrapers and old houses, of restaurants and hotels and theatres which is Manhattan Island—just a block from the miseries and splendors of Fifth Avenue. They had the rear half of the top floor in a brownstone house. The rear half consisted of a square room with a marble fireplace and two large windows, a hall bedroom, and a pair of closets that had been turned into a bath and a kitchenette. It was true you could not work in the kitchenette without leaving the door open, and that filled the living-room with the smell of cooking; and you could not dress in the bathroom unless you stood in the tub.

But the apartment had its charms. One of these was the fireplace, in which the Eliots occasionally burned small sticks of wood (at a cost of ten cents a stick). Another was the roof of the third-floor extension, which had all the essentials of a veranda, including an improvised awning in brown-and-white stripes. You could climb out one of the living-room windows, a feat awkward rather than difficult, and have such a view as America seldom offers. To the right were the narrow back yards of the houses in Thirtieth Street. Straight in front of you, but comfortably distant, rose a twenty-story building with a pergola on top—very new, very modern, very imposing. To the left was the Little Church Around the Corner, with its lawn and its trees and its air of belonging to some other and more gracious world.

The Eliots had lived in this apartment ever since they had come on from Chicago. They had got it originally for forty dollars a month, and, now, after more than three years, it cost only seventy-five. When the spring came, they talked of moving to the country for the summer. They knew where they could get a shack at the seashore within forty miles of the Grand Central for four hundred dollars the season. They talked of going until it was warm enough to move the tea-table out on the roof of the extension, and then Phil announced that he didn't want to be a commuter anyway, and besides they hadn't the four hundred. Phil Eliot had gradually accepted the flat. He had grown into it. Madge Eliot had never really accepted it. She saw more of it than Phil did. Phil was a copy-writer from nine to five in the offices of Ball & Ball, who occupy four floors of an office building in Park Avenue, and who conduct the most elaborate, if not the largest, advertising agency in the world.

One afternoon in June, a week or so after they had moved the tea-table out on the roof, Gertrude Hill came in to call on Madge. Gertrude was by way of becoming a particular friend, though a new one. Gertrude had a job she had made for herself in a department-store; she was part employment manager, part efficiency expert, and part detective, and she drew, apparently, the salaries of all three combined. Madge found her immensely stimulating. A visit from Gertrude always left her feeling that anything was possible, if not probable. Madge hastened to make tea.

"Well," said Gertrude, "how's that good-looking husband?"

"Oh, he's still reading about the West Indies and the days of the buccaneers."

"Still in the West Indies," Gertrude mused, "and it's June, too. Be hot enough here, soon."

She sipped her tea.

"Men *are* funny," she went on. "My boss is still trying to decide whether next winter will be mild, or just average, or severe. I told him there was no way of knowing and he admitted it, but he's still hoping to get an inside tip before he does his final buying."

"I thought business men were decisive," Madge said. "I thought up came the question and—bang came the answer."

Gertrude grinned. "Business men aren't a bit like the pictures of them you get in those 'How I Made Good' stories."

"But they do succeed so astoundingly."

"Yes," said Gertrude, "you certainly are astounded—when you know them."

"But—" Madge protested.

"They succeed for all sorts of reasons except the reasons they give," Gertrude said. "Sometimes it's luck, sometimes it's making friends, sometimes it's a special interest or capacity or talent—whatever you want to call it—that finds a place for itself. But they're all lazy; they're all timid; they're all dreamers. Why, Madge, business men are human—and we'd all rather dream than think."

"Phil is like that," Madge said. She paused, listening. "I thought I heard Phil's key in the lock but I guess I didn't."

SHE was mistaken. She *had* heard it. Phil Eliot had stopped at a second-hand bookstore, found the copy of Exquemelin's "Buccaneers of America" he had ordered three months back, and walked on home. But in the act of opening the front door of the apartment he had heard his own name and instinctively paused.

"Phil is like that."

Phil stood listening, the door half open, his hand on the knob, to learn what Phil was like in his wife's eyes. He recognized Gertrude's voice, but he could not hear what she said. Madge's next words came clearly enough.

"I don't know what's the matter with him," Madge said. "Unless he has lost his ambition. He was ambitious in Chicago. He was bound to land a job in New York and when he got a chance to go into Ball & Ball's he jumped at it. He was so full of hopes and plans and ideas—you'd have thought he was going to be somebody in the business. But not any more. He never talks about his work. His only interest in life is the West Indies, and the old days of the pirates on the Spanish Main."

Neither girl spoke for a long minute. Phil could hear the sound of his own breathing. He wanted to close the door gently and go away, but he did not. He listened.

"Hasn't he had a raise from Ball & Ball?" Gertrude asked.

"He started at forty dollars a week and they gave him a five-dollar raise at the end of the first six months."

Phil winced. Why did Madge have to tell a girl like Gertrude Hill, who got a salary of six or seven thousand dollars a year, how much he was getting?

"THEY promised him another raise in a year, but he never got it."

"Why not?" said Gertrude sharply.

"I don't know. They never mentioned it again."

"Didn't he say anything about it?"

"No," Madge answered. "Phil would not."

"He ought to go to them and get it."

"That's what I thought," Madge said, "but Phil hates to ask for money."

"Everybody hates to ask for money—but it's got to be done just the same."

"Phil never will. Ten years from now we'll be living in this flat, just as we are—unless the building is torn down."

"How silly," Gertrude said. "Phil has got lots of ability and he isn't thirty."

"He's only twenty-eight, but he's settled down. He acts as if he were fifty. Every night after dinner he sits down in that easy-chair and turns on the reading-lamp. With a book and a packet of cigarets and matches he's good for three or four hours, and then it's time for him to go to bed."

"There's nothing criminal about that."

"No," Madge said. "It's rather nice. We have awfully pleasant evenings, and you mustn't think that Phil is ever cross or —or—anything. But—well—it isn't what I want."

"What *do* you want?" asked Gertrude. "A millionaire?"

"No," said Madge quietly.

"I don't believe you know how well off you are. My husband is a luxury. I have

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to support him and I don't always know where he is. I think I'd be glad if he would turn on the reading-lamp occasionally for three or four hours."

Phil, in the doorway, found little comfort in this sentiment.

"Perhaps I do expect too much of Phil," Madge said.

"Well, *what* do you expect? Come down to figures. Is it ten thousand a year or thirty thousand?"

"It isn't a question of thousands, exactly. I want children."

"Why don't you have them, then?"

"And bring them up in a place like this?"

"Of course not. Get a little house in the suburbs—you've got twenty five hundred a year.'

"We've got twenty-three hundred and forty dollars a year."

"Lots of people do it on that."

"Phil simply wouldn't"

"I know," said Gertrude. "Neither would I, and gosh, how I wish I could."

Phil heard her chair scrape as she rose. He drew the door to and fled down the stairs. He walked rapidly round the corner and into a lunchroom. He ordered coffee, but he sat for a long time without drinking it. He was shocked, he was shaken, he was furious. So Madge thought he acted like a man of fifty, settled for life, did she. A lot she knew about what was going on in his mind. Didn't she know that he was within an ace of throwing up his job and going to the West Indies or South America—anywhere away from New York and a desk job!

Phil Eliot was a shy, diffident and worried young man. He would no more have thrown up his job than he would have joined a gang of smugglers. But he thought of himself as a daring soul, capable of any desperate act. In a word, he was very much like other young men.

So Gertrude Hill thought he ought to go to Ball & Ball and get that raise, did she? Madge agreed with her. Well, what good did they think a five-dollar raise would be, anyway!

With an effort he went back over the conversation he had overheard, trying soberly to adjust himself to its revelation. He hadn't known that Madge wanted children. At least, he hadn't really known it. He wondered if what she had said to Gertrude represented merely the mood of the moment, or was it an exposure of her deepest feeling? Which was the real Madge? The Madge who greeted him every night when he came home from the office with a kiss, who seemed to approve of him, to admire him, to love him, or the Madge who was completely disillusioned, who said they would be no better off in ten years. Of course Madge didn't really believe that. Even Gertrude Hill had said it was silly.

PHIL drank his coffee. Of course it was just a mood, only he wished when Madge felt low she wouldn't spill everything to Gertrude Hill. It wasn't fair. But then women weren't fair, anyway. You made allowances for that. He must forget this episode. It would never do to let Madge know that he had overheard.

Phil rose, paid his check. He wondered if he could greet Madge as if nothing had happened. But Madge was so much herself when he opened the front door that it was not difficult.

"Hello!" Madge cried. She came quickly toward him, put her arms around his neck, kissed him.

"You're late," she said.

With his arm around her he walked toward the veranda.

"You haven't missed me," he said. "You've been having company."

"Yes, Gertrude Hill was here."

"Got any tea left?"

"Let me make some fresh—it won't take a minute."

Phil climbed out on the veranda and sat down while Madge made the tea. With a gesture which surprised himself, Phil thrust the book by Exquemelin, for which he had waited so long, under his chair.

That evening Phil twice approached his easy-chair before he could sit down in it. He had a curious distaste for that chair. He opened Exquemelin's book, but he could not read it. He found himself looking up to watch Madge. She sat across the room beside her own lamp, with a napkin she was hemstitching. She *looked* just as contented as she had the night before. But he knew she wasn't contented; he knew she wasn't satisfied with him. He resented her dissatisfaction. He resented even more her notion that *he* was satisfied. Didn't she know him any better than that? Didn't she know that reading about the West Indies was just a poor substitute for going there?

THE next morning Phil sat at his typewriter in the offices of Ball & Ball, but he was not writing. He had decided that if the raise meant so much to Madge perhaps he had better ask for it. He was trying to think of some casual way of mentioning that raise to Mr. Richard T. Ball. It was a little difficult. His relations with Mr. Ball were not casual. They were extremely formal. He had been introduced to Mr. Ball by Spillman shortly after he had joined the staff. On perhaps half a dozen occasions since he had said "How do you do" to Mr. Ball. He thought that Mr. Ball knew him by sight, but he was not sure that Mr. Ball knew his name. How did one walk up to a boss one didn't know and lightly remind him of a raise that had been forgotten?

Besides Richard T. Ball was not merely a boss. He was a personage in the advertising world. He was credited, more than any other one man, with having raised advertising to the dignity of a profession. Phil had actually an enormous respect for him. He tried to puzzle out what Mr. Ball was like on his personal side. But he did not know anything about the man except the tradition of his business career. Phil was glad to be interrupted by Joe Hallet's proposal that they lunch together.

Joe Hallet was the irresponsible genius of Ball & Ball. He never came down on time; sometimes he didn't come at all; often he took three hours for lunch. But Ball & Ball condoned his habits because he had the gift for copy that no one else in the organization could touch. Joe Hallet could write the announcement of an old and proud firm without making it seem a little ridiculous, and that is something that not one copy-writer in a hundred can do. Phil liked him. He felt more at home with Joe Hallet than with anybody else in the office. Joe had a certain distinction that the others lacked. Phil felt a bit superior as he left the office with Joe Hallet and he thoroughly enjoyed Joe's biting account of his latest run-in with Spillman, the copy chief.

"Of course it isn't Old Spillman's fault," Joe Hallet said. "Spillman is all right. It's those damned rules. Ball & Ball think a man can sit down at his desk at nine o'clock sharp, turn out copy until twelve, go to lunch, come back at one, and turn on the copy again until five. It can't be done."

"Some of the men do it," Phil said.

"Yes," Joe Hallet said. "Some of the men do—and some advertisers print what they write, too."

They spent their lunch hour in expatiating each other on the shortcomings of Ball & Ball, and returned to the office pleased with themselves, and actually more ready to work for Ball & Ball than they had been before.

The conversation with Joe Hallet was peculiarly gratifying to Phil. For two days afterward he felt as if he had tasted of freedom, of a fine carelessness. For the time he shared Joe Hallet's sense that he could get a job anywhere and that Ball & Ball didn't really matter. But his mood changed. Joe Hallet *could* get a job anywhere. He, Phil, couldn't. That was why he had never asked for the raise that had been promised him: he was afraid to. His fear made him wish to walk in to Richard T. Ball's office and say:

"Look here, you promised me a raise a year and a half ago. You didn't make good. I'm leaving Saturday."

Phil spent a whole afternoon evolving ways of telling Mr. Ball to go to the devil, and when he went home at five o'clock he was tired, as tired as if he had done a hard day's work after missing a night's sleep. He tried to bury himself after dinner in Exquemelin's book, but he could not read a page of it. Even the big atlas with the map of the West Indies, on which he had written in the dates and locations (long forgotten by an industrial world) of buccaneer exploits, failed to solace him. The career of Sir Harry Morgan and his ruffianly brother and Colonel Byndloss on the Spanish Main, the sailing of Stede Bonnet from Barbados, the pirate republic at New Providence in the Bahamas—all these seemed very far away. What did they matter now? And the romance of San Domingo, of Jamaica, of Tobagos, which was Robinson Crusoe's island—what had they to do with a desk in Park Avenue?

HE PICKED up a new book by a sportsman who had fished the Gulf Stream off the Florida Keys, but Phil could not interest himself in a book about fishing that longed-for water. He suddenly cared too much about actually fishing the Gulf Stream to read about it. The dream no longer interested him. He wanted the reality, and for him, on a salary of forty-five dollars a week, the reality did not exist. He went to bed an hour earlier than usual, very sore on the world.

Phil awoke the next morning and whistled while he dressed. Then he remembered. Somehow his resentment had increased. So Gertrude Hill thought he ought to go and get that raise, did she? And Madge agreed with her. Well, it would serve them both right if he asked for a raise and got fired. The idea of being fired gave him a perverse pleasure. It

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"I don't believe you know how well off you are. My husband is a luxury. I have to support him and I don't always know where he is."

would teach Madge to respect his judgment, and Gertrude Hill, too. By what right had Gertrude Hill criticized him to his wife? And by what right had Madge talked about him to Gertrude? Suddenly he was more angry with Madge than he had ever been before. He managed to get through breakfast without telling Madge what he thought of her, but that was only because he had decided to tell Richard T. Ball what he thought of him.

When he walked down the hall to the desk of Mr. Ball's secretary, his jaw was set. He was in a mood for high words. The secretary admitted instantly that Mr. Ball was in.

One minute later she ushered Phil into Mr. Ball's office. It was a plain room with a large glass-topped table in the middle, at which Mr. Ball sat. He rose as Phil entered, and extended his hand.

"How do you do, Eliot," he said smiling. "Won't you sit down?"

"Thank you," Phil said grimly.

"What can I do for you?" Mr. Ball asked. You would have thought he had been sitting there waiting for Phil to ask him for something.

Phil gulped and opened his mouth to speak. And at that fateful moment the telephone at Mr. Ball's elbow buzzed.

"Pardon me a moment," Mr. Ball said as he reached for the instrument.

Phil had some vague impulse to leave the room while Mr. Ball talked. He got to his feet and turned toward the door, and then he saw the one decoration on the wall of the office—a huge wooden plaque on which was mounted a fish nearly four feet long. Phil took it for a big muscallonge at first glance, but at the second he saw it was a barracuda. He stood studying the details of the fish, which he knew only from pictures, while Mr. Ball talked over the telephone. He was so interested that he did not hear the close of the conversation or the click of the receiver as it was hung up.

"Know what fish that is?" Mr. Ball asked.

Phil turned to face him. "It's a barracuda."

"Right you are." Mr. Ball's tone was at once surprized and gratified. "I had him mounted because I caught him on a trout rod."

"You did!"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Ball crossed the room, opened a cabinet, and took out a rod-case.

"This rod here," he said, as he put the joints together. It was a slender, whiplike thing of split bamboo.

Phil took it, the first fly rod he had ever had in his hand, shook it.

"It doesn't weigh over six ounces, does it?"

"Six and a half."

Phil looked up at the fish on the wall. "It must have been some fight."

"It was," Mr. Ball said proudly. "It took sixty-five minutes by the watch to bring that fish to gaff. You know you're always reading about playing a fish for from two hours to half a day, but when you come to measure the time by the watch it's usually a good deal nearer twenty minutes."

Mr. Ball produced a reel from the cabinet.

"Now that I've made the story as good as I can, it's only fair to add that I had two hundred yards of line instead of fifty."

He handed the reel to Phil.

"Yes— But I see it's only six-thread."

"Oh, yes," Mr. Ball said. "And when I'm telling the story to people who don't know much about fishing, I emphasize that. I tell them the fish weighed forty-five pounds, and the line had a breaking strength of twelve pounds. But you know as well as I do that a twenty-one-thread line wouldn't have been of the slightest advantage. You couldn't lift five pounds dead weight with that rod—and I knew that as long as the rod was safe the line would hold."

"Of course," Phil said.

Mr. Ball put the fly rod away and produced one of the three-six rods of the Light Tackle Club. The cabinet was full of tackle for all sorts of fishing, and Mr. Ball apparently enjoyed showing it. They talked fishing and fishing tackle for half an hour and, by being cautious, Phil was able to hold up his end of the conversation, although he had never caught anything in his life except croppies and bullheads in an Ohio mill-pond, and Mr. Ball had explored all the possibilities of the Restigouche and the Nipigon and the Florida Keys. He was not aware that all his attention was concentrated on holding

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up his end. He was not aware that he had come hating Mr. Ball. He was only aware that he was talking sport with a man who knew what sport was.

Mr. Ball's enthusiasm ceased only when his secretary announced a visitor.

"Hell," he said to Phil, "I'd rather talk fishing. Come in again, won't you? You're the only man in this place that knows the difference between a barracuda and a muscallonge."

"I'd be delighted," Phil said, and he was in the elevator on the way back to his desk before he realized that he had not mentioned that raise. How could he go back now when Mr. Ball had received him so cordially, and so mistakenly, as one of the confraternity of fishermen, and ask him for more money? And then his resentment flamed afresh. Richard T. Ball could spend his vacations on the Florida Keys precisely because he got copywriters for forty-five dollars a week. He went back to the secretary.

"Look here," he said, "I've got to see Mr. Ball again. I'll wait till he's free."

Phil sat and fidgeted for fifteen minutes before the door opened, and then Mr. Ball accompanied his visitor down the hall to the elevator. Phil followed three yards behind. He waited in the middle distance while the two men shook hands and said good-by. Mr. Ball came briskly back. Phil started toward him.

"Hello, there, Eliot," Mr. Ball said genially without pausing.

"May I see you one moment?" Phil asked, and in spite of himself his tone was the tone of his previous talk. "I came in to see you this afternoon and I got so interested in fishing that I forgot what I came for. I wanted to tell you that I was promised a raise in salary to begin a year and a half ago. I never got it."

"You didn't?" Mr. Ball's tone conveyed the deepest concern.

They walked slowly back toward his private office. "How much was it?"

"Five dollars a week."

"What are you getting now?"

"Forty-five."

Mr. Ball raised his eyebrows. It was as if he had remarked that forty-five dollars was a small salary for a man like Eliot.

"Did I promise it myself?" he asked.

"No," Phil said. "Whigam promised it. Whigam left about the time the raise was due."

They had reached the secretary's desk outside Mr. Ball's office.

"Miss Taylor," Mr. Ball said, "take a memorandum to the treasurer. 'We neglected to raise Mr. Eliot's salary from forty-five to fifty dollars a week as we agreed a year and a half ago. Please see that he gets a check for the difference at once and that in future he gets fifty dollars.' "

HE TURNED to Phil. "There," he said, "I hope that will make it right."

"It does—completely."

Mr. Ball smiled at Phil.

"You ought to have told me about this sooner. You might be getting sixty dollars a week now. I hope you know that we would rather pay you ten thousand a year than twenty-five hundred. You know what I mean?"

"Yes," Phil said, "I know."

He went back to his desk with a feeling of elation he had not known for years. What would Madge have to say now? He figured quickly what five dollars a week for a year and a half came to—three hundred and ninety dollars.

At lunch-time he started toward home; he wanted to tell Madge the news; but on second thought he decided he would wait until he got the check from the treasurer. He pictured himself walking in and dropping that check for three hundred and ninety in Madge's lap. He could be quite casual about it. She had said he never would ask for that raise. She had said they would be living in that flat ten years from now. She had said he acted like a man of fifty, settled for life. Well, this would give her a new angle on her husband.

MADGE'S pleasure over the raise startled him. The check was nothing beside the raise. He hadn't imagined that a five-dollar raise could mean so much. She patently regarded the raise as an omen for the future. It was not the five dollars a week that captured her imagination; it was a vision of the future which that five dollars a week suggested—a future of many raises.

He tried to argue her out of this view. He pointed out that getting a raise that had been promised for two years was no promise of future raises. He demonstrated conclusively that he had made friends with Richard T. Ball by the sheerest accident, and proved over and over again that a mutual interest in Florida fishing gave no reason to think that he and Mr. Ball would get along any better as employer and employee. Phil had no notion that he was arguing with himself and not with Madge; that it was he quite as much as she who regarded what had happened as an omen.

Madge insisted that they divide the check for three hundred and ninety. She said she had a plan of her own which she didn't want to tell for her share, and she would ask no questions about what he did with his share. Phil, perforce, agreed.

He spent a dozen evenings in going over the advertisements he had written in the past year. He did not feel himself capable of making any big improvement in them. Occasionally he found a phrase that he might have bettered. But he had not had a chance to do anything big. How could he get a chance to do something big? Richard T. Ball had won his way up from nothing in the advertising business to a point where vacations on the Florida Keys were a matter of course. But times had changed since then. It could not be done again. At least Phil did not see how he could do it. He was not conscious during this period that the atlas with its annotated map of the West Indies, was undisturbed on the lowest shelf of the bookcase or that Exquemelin's book lay, unread and unopened, on top of it.

One morning, coming down the hall after an errand in the art department, Phil observed a brief and bitter altercation between Joe Hallet and Spillman. As Joe walked off grinning ironically, Spillman addressed Phil.

"I wish I had the nerve to fire that man," he said hotly. "Nobody can beat him at his own game. But if we keep him he'll ruin the copy department."

Phil said nothing. He realized that Spillmen's anger had temporarily overcome his discretion.

"By God," Spillman said, "I don't have to put up with him. I *will* fire him." He stopped short. "I'll go and tell Ball that either Hallet goes or I go," and he started off toward the elevator.

Phil hesitated a fraction of a second and then his impulse won.

"Wait a minute," he called to Spillman. "That isn't the way to do it."

He approached Spillman. "You're mad now. Wait until this afternoon."

Spillman grinned sheepishly. "You're perfectly right, Eliot; but, I ask you, what would you do with a man like that?"

"I'd humor him."

"Humor him!" roared Spillman. "Haven't I been humoring him for the last year? Haven't I let him come down at any time he pleased? Haven't I put up with every conceivable violation of office discipline? Haven't I smiled at everything he has handed me? Why, he's had more privileges than any man who ever worked here, and I've *stood* for it. What's the answer? Not the slightest response from him. He called me Simon Legree just now and you'd think he thought he was Uncle Tom. He's got it in for me."

"I know he's annoying, but I don't believe he has got it in for you. I had a talk with him at lunch a couple of weeks ago and my hunch is that he likes you."

"He's got a nice way of showing it, coming in here two hours late and parading the fact before the whole office—forcing me to call him down."

"Well," Phil said, "I think you've got him wrong. He isn't parading the fact that he's late. He's really ashamed of it and he's trying to carry it off. No man likes to come in here late."

"Why doesn't he get here on time, then?"

"He says he got his habits on a morning paper and he can't change."

"Oh, hell! I think he acts like a child."

"Yes, but he doesn't write like a child."

"I know it," Spillman admitted. "But how are you going to handle him?"

"I'd give him an office by himself where he could go in and out any time of the day or night, and then I'd tell him that so far as he is concerned office rules are abolished. I'd tell him that all I asked of him is the kind of copy that only he can turn out."

Spillman hesitated, frowning. Phil saw that he had Spillman thinking.

"I'd like to believe, Spillman," he said earnestly, "that this office is elastic enough to take in any man who has top-notch ability even if he is irregular."

"I tell you what you do, Eliot," Spillman said, "You come up-stairs with me now and tell Richard T. Ball what you've told me."

TOGETHER they approached Mr. Ball; together they presented the case of Joe Hallet *vs.* office discipline; together they departed in triumph.

"I'm much obliged to you," Spillman said to Phil on the way back to the copy department. "If I'd gone up there alone, I'd have got mad. This way is better, even if it doesn't work."

It had not apparently occurred to Spillman that if it did work he had given the credit to Phil in advance. Phil liked him for that, and admired him. He felt that if he ever did do anything worth while Spillman would not stand in his way. Ball & Ball was an elaborate organization; it was too big; it had no soul. But you

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He opened Exquemelin's book, but he could not read it. He found himself looking up to watch Madge.

could make your personality count—if you had one.

Phil told the whole story to Madge that night. She listened with shining eyes, and when he had finished she came over and kissed him and ran her fingers through his hair and said: "I knew you'd do it."

"Do what?"

"Make good."

"I haven't made good. I'm making fifty dollars a week, and there's no prospect that I'll ever make any more. Do you call that making good?"

Madge just smiled.

"Well, *do* you?"

"It isn't how much you're getting—it's your attitude."

"What's an attitude got to do with it?"

"Everything."

"Explain what you mean—if you mean anything."

"No," said Madge softly. "If you don't know——"

He did know, but it did not suit him to admit it. "I'll tell you something," he said. "I might go on working just the way I have been without another thing like that happening for five years."

"Yes," Madge admitted, "you might. But you won't."

AS A matter of history, it was nearly three months before "another thing like that" happened. The tea-table had been moved from the veranda and the awning taken down and October had begun when Phil got a message summoning him to Mr. Ball's office.

"Eliot," Mr. Ball said, "that man Hallet has done more work and better work than he ever did before in his life, and the amusing thing about it is, that he gets down pretty nearly on time every morning. I didn't believe it would work and I don't believe it would work with another man of that type, but just the same it did work with him, and I'm deeply grateful to you."

Phil flushed with pleasure.

"Now," Mr. Ball went on, "we've got a man in the art department—Amidon. He lives in Brooklyn. Yesterday a Brooklyn grocer garnisheed his salary. Amidon is getting fifty dollars a week. He owes a grocery bill of two hundred dollars. I don't know what excuse there is for him. I don't suppose there is *any*. The rule of this office is to fire a man instantly under the circumstances. But I hate to fire men. What would you do?"

"I'd investigate the case," Phil said.

Mr. Ball looked at Phil quizzically. "All right." he said, "go ahead."

Amidon's story was one of the sort that might be duplicated a thousand times over in any large city, a story that can be stated briefly in a dozen words: a small salary, four children, a wife who had never been strong.

The man owed nearly five hundred dollars. It was apparent that he could not satisfy his obligations without help. If Ball & Ball fired him, he might have trouble in getting another job, and when he did, the creditors would be quick to discover it. His only chance was to go to Chicago or San Francisco and start over again, though how he was to do this with a wife and four children and no money Amidon did not see.

Phil presented the facts to Mr. Ball.

Mr. Ball leaned back in his chair. "H-m-m," he said. "And what have you decided?"

With a leap of his imagination that would have been impossible to him three months before, Phil rose to Mr. Ball's hint.

"I've decided," he said, "that we ought to satisfy Amidon's creditors, taking his notes for the amount over a period of one year. We will take ten dollars a week out of his salary until the notes are paid. And since his present salary of fifty dollars a week is barely enough for him to get along on we shall have to raise it to sixty dollars a week."

"In other words," Mr. Ball said, "you propose that we pay Amidon's debts."

"Yes," said Phil.

"Then why not just pay them and have done without all this rigamarole of taking his notes and raising his salary?"

"Because of the effect on Amidon—and on us. We can't afford to have it said that when an employee gets into money difficulties we step in and pay his debts. We can very well afford to have it said that we took over a man's obligations and helped him to pay them."

"Very well," said Richard T. Ball.

He leaned back in his chair and put the tips of his fingers together thoughtfully.

"I like to hear you use that word 'we,'" he said gravely. "When a member of this

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organization says 'we,' I feel he's really—joined."

He flashed a look at Phil.

"That's by the way—the thing I wanted to say is this: we're getting too big. I can't know the men who work here the way I used to. I've got to know them. At least I've got to know all about them.

"I like to believe that I've substituted knowledge for guesswork in advertising; that I've built a reputation on sound method and not on—splash. But in the last analysis, no knowledge and no method is a substitute for men. We've got to use men in this business—personalities. And if I don't know the personalities in the office I can't use them. I've suspected for a long time that I didn't know my men as well as I should. You've proved it to me. I was mistaken about Hallet. I was worse mistaken about you.

"You've been here more than three years. I supposed you weren't especially interested in Ball & Ball. Through an accident I have discovered that you are interested in the way I like best. I supposed you were just an ordinarily good man—the kind we can get in the open market for forty or fifty dollars a week any day in the year. Through an accident I have discovered that you have an altogether exceptional ability to put yourself in the other fellow's place.

"If I have any excuse, it is in the fact that you haven't so far developed any unusual capacity for putting yourself over on the boss—you didn't sell yourself to me as effectively as you might have in your first three years here."

He grinned at Phil and Phil grinned back. Mr. Ball leaned forward.

"The point is, I need a *liaison* officer to keep me in touch with the personalities I'm employing. How would you like to be a special assistant to me?"

"I'd like it—more—more—more than I can say," Phil said.

"I'd like it, too," said Richard T. Ball.

"But there is one objection. We've got a new account—a large account—I may say a very large account. These people have a hotel in Havana; they're building one in Jamaica; they're planning one in the Windward Islands. They are going to have the largest winter-resort interests in the world.

"We've got to send a man down there right away to go over the whole field with them. And for the right man the job has possibilities. You know the West Indies are romantic—ever read about the buccaneers?"

"I should say I have!" Phil cried. "Why the West Indies saw two centuries of piracy."

"H-m-m-m!" Mr. Ball smiled. "Then I take it you'd like to handle this account?"

"Would I!"

"You'd rather do that than be my special assistant?"

"I'd like—I'd like," Phil stammered, "I'd like a little of both."

"H-m-m-m," said Mr. Ball. "That *is* a solution, now, isn't it?"

Phil hailed a taxi in Park Avenue and told the driver to hurry.

"Madge," he said when he reached the flat, "what did you do with your share of that three hundred and ninety?"

"I put it in the bank. What did you do with yours?"

"Put it in the bank."

They smiled at each other.

"Well," Phil continued, "the time has come to spend that check. You're going to spend it—and then some."

"What for?"

"Summer clothes."

"For October?"

"For the West Indies. We sail next week as the special representatives of Ball & Ball—the Bahamas, Cuba, Jamaica, San Domingo, Grenada, Barbados, Tobagos, Panama."

Madge looked at him with eyes in which fright was rapidly growing.

"I'm perfectly sane, Madge," he said. He put his arms around her. "We're leaving this flat forever. When we get back to New York we're going to have a house in Bronxville or Scarsdale or whatever suburb you choose. We're going to have a house—with a yard—and all that *that* means."

Madge clung to him and wept; she wept until Phil was worried for fear she never would stop; and he was about to shake her when she looked up at him and, half laughing and half sobbing, said:

"So you're a pirate at last, Phil."

Phil looked down at her. All his resentment was gone. He tried to smile and the tears came to his eyes.

"Yes," he said, "the pirate of Park Avenue."

The Grandchild

By Theodosia Garrison

I was born to stately rooms and chairs of little ease,
And shining floors that maids precise must polish on their knees.
They wonder why I like them not—they never guess I know
My Granny loved a gipsy lad, long and long ago.

My Father is a parson mild, my Mother's neat and meek;
They marvel at my black eyes, the crimson on my cheek.
They wonder why I rove the hills and love a scarlet gown,
And run to watch the horses when drovers come to town.

My Granny wed the Squire O'Down, his picture's on the wall,
What happened to the gipsy lad I never knew at all.
I only know when Autumn turns the mountains to a flame
That somewhere, from a far place, he seems to call my name:

"Come out, come out, my little brown girl, where all the world is free,
Come out and face the singing wind and take the road with me!"
How can I sew my long white seam, or play my spinet when
My mind is dancing on the hills or racing through the glen?

My Granny died e'er I was born—I wonder if she knows
That in my face and in my heart her great adventure shows?
My parents sigh that I do ill what maidens need must learn,
But I could read a patteran and make a camp-fire burn.

I sit beneath the Squire O'Down, his picture on the wall,
But outside in the moonlight I hear the gipsy call,
And this night, as all other nights, my heart would force the door
And take the road to Romany my Granny took before.

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Third-Speed Tarring

By William Dudley Pelley

The story of a twenty-year-nourished, diabolically clever plot to "get even." It illustrates the old saw that "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft a-gley," and that it's sometimes just as well that they do.

A FEW minutes past one o'clock of a rainy day last April, the proprietor of a job printing plant in a certain Long Island city returned from lunch to find a stranger waiting in his office.

The office was located on the second floor of the building. As the printer entered, his caller's back was toward him. The man stood before the big front window, gazing down into the street. He was a tall, well-knit man except for the slightly rounded shoulders. He wore an inexpensive suit of dark gray and a black felt hat whose brim was turned down over his eyes. When he turned abruptly at the owner's entrance the printer saw that the portion of the face not concealed by the dark Vandyke beard was terribly pocked, either by acid or disease.

The stranger was the first to speak. "Well, Charley," he announced, "I've come back!"

Bewilderment spread over the printer's features. Then came amazement, then fright. "My God!" he cried, "*Quigley!* Where have you come from now?"

"Asia," said the other curtly. "Can I see you alone for a few minutes, Charley?"

The printer gripped the counter until the first shock of his stunning surprise had passed. Then he led the way rather unsteadily to his private office near by. It was significant that they had not clasped hands.

"I'll have to apologize for startling you, Charley," began the other, as the printer closed the door. The latter sank into his swivel-chair, but the stranger was content with a corner of the near-by table. "I know I'm the last person on earth that you were expecting to find in your office to-day. I know too that after what's happened you'd be justified in throwing me out. All the same, I couldn't resist coming in and having a brief talk with you. I didn't know but what I might find you broadminded enough to hear my side of the story."

The printer could find no answer. He collapsed deeper in the chair with his eyes riveted on the hard weather-bronzed face before him.

"I've made trouble enough in your family, Charley, but that's neither here nor there. Strange as it may sound to say so, I did what I did for Madeleine's sake and you can make the most of it——"

"I always thought so," the other replied in a hoarse whisper. "Madeleine thought so too."

The man on the desk winced as though a blow had been struck him. "Is that the truth, Charley?"

"Yes, that's the truth."

"IT HELPS—some," answered the stranger cryptically.

"You've been in Asia?"

"I've been in Japan. When I left the country shortly after 'it' happened, I had no trouble in getting a job with the Japanese Government. I've been in the Chemistry Division of their War Department."

"For twenty years?"

"Mostly."

"You've changed a bit, Quigley."

"I suppose so. I've lived more stories than Kipling ever wrote. I suppose I've aged some, too. My nose was broken and my face badly pocked this way by an explosion in a factory in Tokio several years ago."

"Why have you come back now?"

"My—indiscretion—is outlawed. Of course my changed appearance might have assured my personal safety, but I preferred not to take the chance. I wanted to wait until I could come back and do what I've got to do without danger of my plans miscarrying because of an arrest. I've come to you, Charley, because I want information. First, where was Madeleine buried?"

"Why—up in Foxboro of course—alongside little Jim."

Again the stranger winced. "All right," he said hoarsely as though to shut off further discussion of a painful subject. "I just wanted to know, that was all. And Foxboro—how long since you were back there?"

"I spent my vacation there last summer."

"And Arthur Tarring, is he still there?"

"He is; he's cashier of the First National Bank now. He got the place when Abiah Fulford died sixteen years ago."

The stranger got to his feet and paced the small office quickly. His hard face was an unpleasant thing to behold.

"You're not holding it against *him*, are you, Quigley?" the printer demanded.

"All of it! everything!" snapped the other savagely. "If he'd let me have that loan, my business wouldn't have gone bankrupt. If the business hadn't gone bankrupt, I wouldn't have forged old man Harrison's name to that note to get the money to save Madeleine's life. So Arthur Tarring is responsible. And Arthur Tarring is going to pay. That's why I'm back at last—to see that Arthur Tarring pays."

The printer eyed his fugitive brother-in-law sadly.

"Haven't you done enough, Quigley, without—without——"

"Without committing more crime? This isn't crime! it's justice. Once upon a time when we were young together up in that little Vermont town of Foxboro, I went to Sunday-school and learned the beautiful Christian policy of returning good for evil, helping those who despitefully used me and persecuted me, and turning the left cheek when struck on the right. I've been weaned from all that bunk, Charley. I've lived for twenty years where the law is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. I've existed among the millions that Americans would call the dregs of humanity. And I've learned a few things. That policy of non-resistance is piffle. It gets you nowhere. It means personal submersion and oblivion in the battle of life. I want no part of it. All I want is justice. I haven't had justice—not according to my philosophy—and I intend to get it."

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"I suppose you mean retaliating on Arthur Tarring, who was only doing his duty. But as I view the whole circumstance, Quigley, from an unbiased basis, the root of the whole affair rests solely on your dislike for Tarring. The antagonism between you is due to the difference in your temperaments. You wanted to make big money in a quick spectacular way. Arthur was content to go slower and surer, saving his pennies and paying attention to detail. He's a good chap, one of the finest fellows in the world. But, constituted as you were, you couldn't get his view-point. I thoroughly believe that if you went to Arthur to-day and asked for help, despite your indiscretion, he'd be the one man in the whole country beside myself who would help you."

"I don't want his help! I don't want any part of him whatever. He had the chance—the big chance—to help me once, and he refused. You know well enough what came of it. Now I'm going to put one over on him. I detest his plodding, grubbing, penny-pinching ways, and I'm going to show him where they land him when opposed to brains and nerve."

"What are you going to do? You're not going to kill him?"

THE other man laughed nastily. "No, I'm not going to kill him. Leave that crude method for your story-book desperadoes. I'm going to leave him very much alive and very well. But I certainly do intend to make him hand over the amount I lost in that smash-up, because he wasn't big and broad and friendly enough to take a chance on me at a critical time, the most critical time in my whole life."

"It wasn't his own money he would have been lending you; it belonged to the bank's depositors and he had to play safe."

"Perhaps so. That's his policy, always 'playing safe.' It cost me my business, my wife, twenty years of exile in a foreign country. I intend to get it back with interest. Now we'll see who wins on it in the long run."

"He will," affirmed the brother-in-law.

"He won't!" the stranger contradicted.

The printer made a gesture of bewilderment and despair. "It's none of my affair," he declared finally in hollow voice. "You made one bed twenty years ago, Quigley, and have been lying in it. If you want to make another you must lie in that also. What do you want of me—money?"

"I have plenty of money. I said I merely wanted information about Tarring. I was going through to Vermont by way of New York, and thought I'd call off and see you, and incidentally get it. I'll probably never see you again, Charley. After I've pulled off what I came for, I'm going back to the Orient. I'll probably die out there."

"Quigley! For God's sake stop and consider! You're not going to commit another crime?"

"I said I was going to even things up; take a fall out of that jelly-bean 'policy' of Tarring's. Let it go at that. I have my method and it's infallible. Don't worry about me being caught. My way is too shrewd. I've evolved it over too many years of exile and remorse. We were all good friends together once, Charley, you and I and Arthur and everybody. But the things I've been called upon to go through have changed me and you can't blame me for what they've made me. I've had a broken heart for twenty years, Charley, and it's too late for any remedy now. I want the grim satisfaction of knowing that little detail-grubbing Arthur Tarring bears his share of the blame for the things I've gone through. Then I don't care what happens."

"If you're indeed Quigley Franklin tell me something. When you and I were walking home with Madeleine Washburn the night of the high-school graduation twenty-five years ago, what did Madeleine say to me as we parted?"

II

ON THE tenth day of last May at two-fifteen in the afternoon the Boston-Montreal express stopped at the little Vermont town of Foxboro long enough to drop off the mail, allow a few passengers to alight, and throw off on to the waiting baggage truck two suitcases with ends lettered: "E. K. Markhim."

Among the passengers was a tall, thin man with a hard face, dressed in an inconspicuous suit and with a soft hat of black felt turned down over his eyes.

He went to the baggage truck, produced the proper checks, and saw the two heavy suitcases loaded on to the footboard of the Foxboro House bus. Then he climbed into the dilapidated old vehicle and along with a couple of traveling salesmen was driven up the hill to the business section. In that short ride his hard gray eyes missed nothing, all the old familiar landmarks as well as the thousand little changes the intervening years had wrought. If here and there he recognized a familiar face, changed a bit perhaps because of the passing years, he gave no sign. Certainly no one recognized *him*.

On the hotel register he signed the name "E. K. Markhim" in a bold, characterful hand. He gave New York City as his residence. He engaged a three-dollar room, paid for it a week in advance, and personally superintended the deposit of the two mysterious suitcases in his new quarters above stairs. Returning to the lobby he bought a cigar and passed out on to the wide veranda which fronts our local hostelry along Main Street.

DIRECTLY across Main Street from the Foxboro House is the First National Bank. It is one of the oldest and soundest financial institutions in the Green Mountain State. On one side is Micah Carley's grocery and feed store. On the other is Haswell Baker's Drug Emporium. The bank front consists of one big window of plate glass with the entrance at the left up two steps, and old-fashioned double doors with the banking hours lettered upon them in battered gold-leaf.

Entering the bank, the depositor finds

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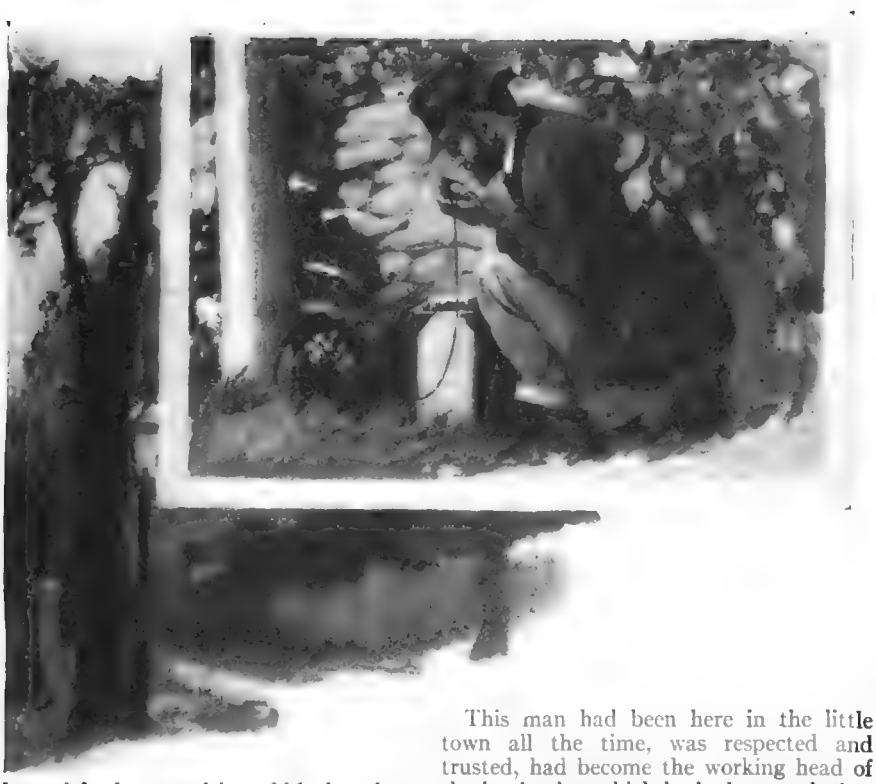

a long eight-foot partition of black walnut and plate glass dividing the lobby from the one banking-room behind. There is six feet between this partition and the ceiling. Up near the front there is one narrow grilled door that leads into the main banking-room, and at alternate spaces down the room are two windows marked respectively "Deposits" and "Payments."

Arthur Tarring's desk is located close beside the big plate-glass front window. At night, when his desk is closed and he has gone, an unobstructed view is gained from the Main Street sidewalk of the big old-fashioned vault in the rear over which a single incandescent bulb burns through the night hours. It might be appropriate to insert here that in all of its banking history—extending over a half-century—that vault has never been tampered with; the bank has never had a robbery.

THE man seated on the Foxboro House veranda, therefore, could see Arthur Tarring plainly. He watched the cashier answer the telephone several times, and smiled grimly as he thought of the message which was coming to Arthur over that same instrument in the not far-distant future. He saw old David Babcock, the bookkeeper, come over and consult with Arthur about papers, and once Miss Willard, the teller, brought him a check over which there seemed to be a question of payment. Quietly, efficiently, mechanically, Arthur drew his day's work to a close, not unlike five thousand other such days since he had become personally responsible for the safety and success of the institution.

When his eyes first caught sight of Tarring's figure, a sudden wild impulse went through Quigley Franklin to forget his animosity, go across the street and embrace the staid, steady, reliable friend of years ago. But the habits of a lifetime can not be changed in a moment. The fugitive had gone too far to falter, and give up at last to a bit of sentiment. Then the same old animosity took its place.

This man had been here in the little town all the time, was respected and trusted, had become the working head of the institution which he had entered after leaving high school. He had prospered and was probably happy, while the other man's portion had been exile and bitterness and heartache. Yes, things had gone too far now to abandon them for a bit of softness and melancholy.

The width of the street was not too great, however, for Franklin to note that time had wrought changes in Arthur's figure also. He had grown stout, his hair and mustache were turning gray. He wore heavy gold-rimmed spectacles, secured from sudden accident by a yard of half-inch black ribbon. Franklin could not see Arthur's eyes, but they were kindly blue and their gravity bespoke the responsibility he felt himself under as manager of the bank. Old Colonel Campbell, the town's leading attorney, often declared that one who didn't know Arthur well might decide from the look of perpetual worry in the cashier's eyes that something was wrong with his accounts. Since automobiles came in, and our language got mixed up with motor jargon, the town invented a name for Arthur epitomizing his character. It called him "Third-Speed Tarring" for his economy, his financial caution, and the slow, steady, sure way in which he handled the depositors' money.

Having watched Arthur long enough to get his bearings and composure, as well as to finish the cigar, the stranger tossed the butt away and arose to his feet. Gathering himself together and pulling the hat-brim down a little closer over his eyes, he crossed the street on the first part of his errand—the trying of an experiment, and the first risky portion of the whole abnormal adventure; the determination whether the banker friend of his boyhood would recognize him as the years and his troubles had changed him.

He entered the bank and moved to Miss Willard's window. "My name is Markhim," he announced. "Perhaps you've heard of me through your local Board of Trade. I've had some correspondence with them about locating a small factory here: I'm contemplating the manufacture of an invention of mine—an electric meter. I shall be here for some time and would like to open at least a temporary account for personal expenses."

Arthur glanced up quickly from his desk. Such an announcement was sweet music to the cashier's ears. He came forward to welcome the new business man personally. He had heard of the proposed factory.

The eyes of the two men met. Under the beard Franklin's lips were closed so tightly that they were bloodless.

But in Arthur's eyes was no recognition!

"How much do you wish to deposit?" the cashier asked pleasantly.

"I'll start off with a thousand dollars." The stranger brought out a well-filled wallet and laid ten one-hundred-dollar bills on the worn counter under the wicket. "Of course I don't know whether I can come to terms with your Board or not, but their correspondence was suggestive enough to make the trip up here seem advisable. One thing is certain: I am able to finance my own invention and build my own plant; I am not out to sell stock or ask your bank or townspeople for money."

Arthur filled out the deposit card and shoved it under the wicket for the identifying signature.

"Then you're something novel in the line of 'new industries' for the average country town," he laughed. "Might I ask then, just what brings you to decide on this location?"

"Labor," snapped the stranger. "I've had enough of unions as you find them in the big cities. I want to get back into a smaller country town where labor discontent is unknown."

"Drop in any time," invited the cashier when the business was ended. "If I can help the new project along, feel free to call on me."

"Thank you," the other responded, "I may!"

STORING his new passbook in his coat pocket, the stranger shook the hand profferred through the wicket opened for the purpose, and withdrew. Not by the flicker of an eyelid had Arthur recognized him!

"I'll call on you all right," he muttered grimly as he crossed the street.

The arrival of the stranger in Foxboro had been upon a Saturday. For the ensuing week he boarded at the Foxboro House and carried on negotiations with the local Board of Trade.

By Thursday it was plainly evident that they were going to "land" him. He wanted nothing they could not easily and cheaply grant, and on Friday the regular issue of *The Foxboro Weekly Times* carried a three-column front page write-up of the new industry which was to make over and occupy the abandoned and dilapidated mills of the long since expired Sagamon Woolen Company.

"Third-Speed" Tarring, ever cautious, communicated privately with Bradstreet's, and got a special report on the man Markhim.

The report established the manufacturer's credit and prestige. It declared that he had first come to the commercial rating company's attention when he had landed in this country from Japan, where he had held a responsible engineering position with

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The Colyumists' Confessional

XII. SOME ONCE-WERES, INCLUDING HIMSELF

By Henry Sydnor Harrison

Mr. Harrison, once colyumist of the Richmond Times-Dispatch, *and since author of "Queed," "Angela's Business," "V. V.'s Eyes," talks of the auld lang syne of colyum conducting.*

IT SEEMS appropriate to conclude this series of confessions with a few consoling sentiments from the older generation who have outgrown such things, by way of pointing a moral and offering a benediction. This confessional, like most, revealed a few mild sins and a great many good excuses. Like other crimes, it is clear that crimes of humorous intent are not altogether a fellow's fault, being largely thrust upon the innocent by "social conditions," such as—witness the reminiscence of Mr. Harrison—the necessity of justifying the extravagant expenditure of five dollars a week for some journalistic task like emptying the waste-baskets or reviewing books. Once the lure of laughter takes hold, the victim finds that one joke leads inevitably to another, and in a short time he can not mingle with convivial company or rest one finger on the keyboard rail of a typewriter without succumbing to the temptation to make just one more pun. What this joke-room sociability may lead to in the way of boring into the foundations of sober society the union card of what F. P. A. described as the "jokesmith's and versefitter's union" shows. Thus it is that humorists, when sober, always wear that familiar melancholy air, like any one the morning after.

But if the victim is given half a chance and the vice does not take too strong a hold upon him, he braces up against the Demon Fun and, leaving the haunts of hilarity forever, becomes a sober citizen, often attaining a respected position in the community. There was a rumor that the mayor of St. Paul had once been a colyumist, but this proved to be untrue. He turned out to have been a respectable newspaper sporting editor. Jay House of the Philadelphia *Ledger*, however, was once a mayor, which proves the point equally well, namely, that colyumists usually have good stuff in them. Every one knows that in a sense all eminent public men have at one time or other in their career been humorists, or vice versa.

Anyway, the sad history of humor in this country shows a fair number of brands plucked from the burning. Ted Robinson goes so far as to say that "there are very few first-class colyum conductors in the country—so many of them have quit the business and gone into other work." Thomas Augustin Daly, formerly of the Philadelphia *Record*, is now purely a poet. Strickland Gillian, W. R. Rose of the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, Homer Croy, Will Levington Comfort, Edmund Vance Cooke, and many others are now engaged in dignified pursuits. This increasing soberness may be due to the American Press Humorist's Association, which acts as a kind of safety-valve for all these one-time humorously wayward. Somewhat like the institution described by Oliver Wendell Holmes in his "Visit to the Home for Aged and Indigent Punsters." At their annual reunions, in which six days are devoted to banquets, luncheons and excursions, they doubtless get rid of their accumulated excess of comic steam, and in a safe and salutary way, for there, once a year, are brought face to face humorists reformed as well as humorists confirmed and habitual, and their meeting must be sobering. Moreover, the members always bring their families to these reunions, and what man is there so hardy as to attempt to be funny in the presence of his wife and the wives of all the other humorists in the land?—THE EDITORS.

ONE day in September, 1904, John Stewart Bryan, at that time managing owner of the Richmond *Times-Dispatch*, said to me at lunch: "How would you like to write book reviews for the *Times-Dispatch?*"

I was then experimenting with a little manufacturing business from which I was getting nothing but experience, and less and less of that. Struck with the aptness of Mr. Bryan's inquiry, I replied: "I'd like very much to write book reviews for the *Times-Dispatch.*"

"Very well," said he. "You'll get five a week."

I started my newspaper career on the spot, and I wrote such long book reviews, and carried so many books up and down on the suburban trolley, that I was raised to seven a week almost before you knew it. This, however, I shall confess, was contrary to the judgment of the conservative managing editor, who expostulated to Mr. Bryan, in effect: "I don't say the boy's work is entirely devoid of merit. People who like that sort of thing may like it well enough. I don't say. But seven dollars for reviewing books—whew! Where's this extravagance to end?"

It was an awkward moment and I might have been demoted—the "literary page," balanced against book advertising, being distinctly a luxury—but events, in fact, took the opposite course. My status, suddenly and oddly, was amplified. In the days when the manufacturing business was tottering to its fall, Mr. Bryan spoke again: "I want you to write me a few editorial paragraphs every day." About the time I was auctioning off the machinery he added: "I see some of the papers are running topical verse every day by their own office bards. Any reason you shouldn't do that for us?"

My position in both instances was that of the gentleman asked if he could play on the fiddle: I supposed I could if I tried. So far as I recall, I had never attempted to write verse before, while as for the other phase of my novel responsibility, I literally didn't know it by name. Till that moment I had gone along in the belief that an editorial paragraph was just what it said: an editorial article, one paragraph long, presumably proving something important by logic and statistics.

Roused by a desk and a salary that ran to two figures, I now addressed myself to my education.

In the deceased manufacturing business I had learned that if you wanted to know how a thing was being done, the best plan was to get the other man's article and take it apart. The simple rule was applied in the new investigations. I read stacks and stacks of papers, skipping wars and rumors of wars to concentrate on the saucy squib. And gradually, as time passed, I came to know and differentiate; I followed and I imitated the anonymous wits who best exemplified, to my taste, the theory and practise of the neatest of literary arts. (On the whole, a bard must stand on his own legs, but a paragrapher could lean heavily on his fellows, borrowing with no niggard hand.)

The men who were working then are mostly at it to-day; they are written of in detail elsewhere. I found myself turning, in 1905 and 1906, most confidently to a small selected group: To the New York *Evening Mail* and the Houston *Post;* to Jim Nevin of Georgia and the Washington *Herald;* to Ted Robinson of Cleveland and the veteran B. L. T. in Chicago; to the Charleston *News and Courier*, the Milwaukee *Sentinel*, the Indianapolis *News*, and presently to the new Nashville *Tennesseean*, where a young man named Grantland Rice was making a brilliant début. From all these, and more, I bagged and benefited, struggling to turn out twenty passable bits a day, besides the "poem" and the rest of it. But from the start my personal favorites were the first two I have mentioned, the *Evening Mail* and the Houston *Post.*

The *Evening Mail* ran a fully developed "column" in the contemporary sense. It was signed with initials only, but there came a pleasant day when I received a letter of commendation from its conductor—one of those generous acts which really do

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lubricate the wheels of life—and so I learned the name behind that constant F. P. A. It was Adams, from first to last, who was my chief professor. From him I did learn much about verse and metres; and as paragrapher I found him more versatile and suggestive than any of the others. With a wider range than Bailey's, he "wielded" a compacter wit. Citations are dangerous and not always fair, but some of Adams's lines (like his summary of the Castellane dissolution, with the unusual complications it involved: "Boni retains his maiden name") have stuck fast in my mind as models of fine brevity. To provoke a smile in five words, by supreme point and pertinence, this, indeed, is the dream which haunts paragraphers in their sleep.

From Adams also flowed that sense of pride of craft, one special development of which is the subject of this reminiscence. He had, then as now, a sharp eye for the foibles of writers and the slips of print; then as now he would hold up the nonsensical phrase and the worn cheap gibe in a satirical setting of his own that left no sting. It is Adams's contention that he once had to admonish the writer publicly for using "like"—"like as if it was a conjunction," but I must see the documents before I ever believe that. I do gladly testify, however, that by a burlesque of my hard-working muse in his column one day he taught me once for all that "idea" and "fear," "banner" and "hosanna," are not universally perfect rhymes. I may say that I had never thoroughly understood the Yankee ear, down to that time.

It was a day of activity and development in the interesting field. New papers were, like the *Times-Dispatch*, adding poets and paragraphers; old poets and paragraphers were taking more interest in themselves and each other. The Press Humorists Association was having lively conventions; George Bailey of the Houston Post drew the fire of the civilized world; wags in sundry places became fired by the emulative instinct; and it was the easier for F. P. A.'s columnar correspondence school to make its courses effective. In brief, the short-line writers were growing class-conscious; they were growing proud; and the emergence of the Paragraphers' Union became inevitable.

The genesis of the idea, as we see, was not in Richmond, but I believe I wrote the editorial summoning the brethren to the Union Jack. Mr. Bryan, who had been interested in the humoristic rivalry from the beginning, was much entertained; and when I suggested a Union card, to be presented to ostensible members as a symbol of the bond and to make it all regular, he gladly embraced the notion. So the card was duly prepared and printed in our press, and I sent it out, unasked and unauthorized, to all the leading paragraphers in the country, or at least to all who had seemed to share in the preliminary stirrings.

Thus the Union made its impromptu bow. Of course it was, and remained, a loose affair, a "josh" organization if you like. It never had an officer or an election committee or rules; it transacted no business; and the nearest thing to a convention it ever held was when Grand Old Bailey, coming out of the West as the official bearer of the electoral vote of the State of Texas, made the rounds among his welcoming colleagues, exhibiting a vest made of the skins of twenty rattlesnakes and otherwise conducting a memorable itinerary. But the idea of the thing certainly appealed to the fraternity; their continuing jokes about their Paragraphers' Union suits and the like showed that they didn't forget it; and really I believe the Union was as effective in its way as some more pretentious associations. By giving a form to thoughts already in the air, it fostered the paragrapher's sense of belonging to a craft, it reminded him of the watchful scrutiny of his fellow-craftsmen, and so it did, I think, spur him on to better work.

This, it will be seen, was at the end of 1907. Not very much later, through office vicissitudes, I was made chief editorial writer of my paper and had to withdraw, largely, from the more amusing work. Indeed I had found it a happy experience, and I think I learned much from it, too—though that claim, I have reason to believe, might be challenged in some quarters. For all my training in pithy statement, I have heard it charged that I can still take as many words to pass a given point as anybody else. One must learn to bear up under animadversions, ejecting them resolutely from the consciousness. But I can never forget—sometimes I recall it suddenly in the dead of night, with a shock of cold responsibility—that I am the author of more than one thousand published poems.

Certificate of Membership in

The Paragraphers' Union

Know All Men by These Presents, That The_____
Is a duly constituted and regular Member of *The Paragraphers' Union*, such to remain until the End of Time, Grim Death or Forcible Ejection at the hands of its Indignant Colleagues.

The Attention of Members is Called to the Following:

¶ Object of The Union To Annihilate the Antique, to Massacre the Mossbacked, and to Abolish the Ditto Mark from the face of the Habitable Globe.

¶ Motto of the Union Down with the Paragraphophone!

¶ You can't Teach an Old Joke New Tricks. Be a Big Gun. Don't Be a Repeater.

¶ Don't Be a Parrotgrapher. Be Aboriginal without the Ab. Use Mother-wit, not Grandmother

¶ Favorite Dish of the Union: Brains. Favorite Book, The Origin of Species Favorite Animal, The Gnu.

¶ Most Hated Fruit (Of course) The Jestnut. Most Hated Tool The Old Saw. Most Hated Vehicle: The Hackney Coach. Most Hated Animal, The Threadbear.

¶ The Love of Sameness is the Rut of All Evil. A Paragrapher looks Foolish in the Stereotypers' Room.

¶ There are No Dues allowed in The Union, and No Mill-dews. We use No Union Label. People Spot Our Work by Reading It.

¶ Do not Refer to Non-Union Paragraphers as Scabs. Nothing Stings Like the Truth.

Whereunto: Witness our Hands and Seals, Given this **25th Day of December,** in the Year of Our Lord, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seven.

For the Union—

THE EVENING MAIL
THE HOUSTON POST.
The Times-Dispatch

The union card of the first National Versefitter's and Jokesmith's Union. Colyum conducting has since become an open-shop industry.

MY LOVE-STORY

A lady of sagacity and beautiful audacity once
  had the pertinacity to ask me, at her door:
"If I can find a minister who is not bold or
  sinister—why should I stay a spinister—
  and you a bacheldore?"

It was no time for puttering or stammering or
  stuttering, and so I hastened, uttering as
  fast as I could speak:
"Had I a home colonial, with furnishings ba-
  ronial, I might feel matrimonial—but
  NOT on six a week."

She laughed and said quite cynical:
"Well, you're the very pinnacle of everything
  that's finical"—but I said nothing more.
And thus we found no minister, and I moved
  off to Finisterre, and she is still a spinister,
  and I'm a bacheldore.

THE CAPTING'S REPRIMAND

When the capting saw that the bos'n's jaw
  Contained a quid, o' co'se
He stopped and cried: "Why, sink my side!
  Why don't you up and bos'? "

And the bos'n turned and said: "I'm durned
  If I knowed who the deuce you wuz,
Till you got reel close. Why don't I bos'?
  Why, blow it all, I does!

"Aye, all this day have I bos'd away
  Till my legs went stiff and sore:
And for what I ha' did, I must have one quid
  And then I'll bos' some more."

And the capting said: "Why, strike me dead!
  You draws eight pound a year!
Do ye think that's for just to chaw and chor?
  Git to work! Send the cox'n here."

And the cox'n came to the sound of his name,
  Prepared for to get some knocks,
And the capting ast: " 'Ere, man, dodgast!
  Why don't you go and cox?"

And the cox in gloom said: "Split my boom,
  If ever I seen that beat!
For to repermand *ME*, who ha' coxed, by gee!
  Till I ruint my hands and feet!

"Why all this May, there ain't been a day
  I ever have failed to cox:
Now I make ree-quest that you leave me rest,
  'Cause I'm sick with the chicking-pox."

And the capt said: "Hey! You don't draw pay
  For to have no chicking-pox.
I'll clap yer in the brig if you don't upjig
  Right now to the poop and cox."

So the capt walked off, and the cox, with a
  cough,
  He laid him down and napt,
And the bos'n hid in the hold with his quid
  And thought o'er his talk with the capt.

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Jimmy Evans Comes Back

By Arthur Crabb

A story in which the way of a maid with a man is matched by the way of a very skilful man with the maid, proving that a truly great crush can't be fooled by any kind of cantankerousness or misunderstanding. Mr. Crabb, who, when he is not planning houses for real people, is constructing charming romances about them, knows that many an indifferent exterior covers an enduring foundation, and vice versa.

MRS. CHARLES ADAMS WEST, *née* Catherine McKean, was lunching on the Windham Roof with her husband one day early in June when she saw James Evans.

A dozen or so years before Catherine had been the supreme belle of Alden and its environs, and there had been a great deal of surprise when, from the multitude howling at the gates of her affections, she had chosen the quiet, colorless, slow-going Charles. People said she took him because he had barrels of money and would be easy for her to manage. Perhaps that was so—Catherine never told—but the idea got a little frayed around the edges during the next dozen years, during which Catherine gave unmistakable signs of complete devotion to Charles, and presented him with four strong, husky, good-looking children, two boys and two girls. Catherine was pure gold.

That day in June she smiled at Jimmy and he came over to her table.

"So you've come back again, have you?" she said, and Jimmy admitted that he had come back again.

"For how long this time?" she asked.

"Indefinite," Jimmy said. "I haven't any plans."

"Then come to dinner. Can you come to-morrow night?"

Jimmy could. In the olden days Jimmy had been a close friend of Catherine's, but never a suitor so far as any one knew, nor, so far as I knew, had any woman whatsoever ever gotten under his hide.

Jimmy, thanks to his ancestors, was pretty well fixed with this world's goods, but, thanks to his ancestors again, he was a very substantial citizen. He had a keen mind, was an observing lad, and had a knack for writing, which he put to good use. He traveled, studied and wrote; he had had half a dozen books published and they had been well received, and he had done a lot of special writing for magazines and newspapers. He was a well-informed man, his perspective was broad and his judgment was sound.

At dinner the next night and afterward he told something of his recent experiences and admitted, under pressure from Mrs. West, that he was going to loaf all summer, but didn't know just where; he had been considering the matter and had come to no conclusion.

"Then spend it with us," she said. The West house at Millhampton was famous for its hospitality.

"It's mighty good of you to suggest it," Jimmy said, "but I've got to work and I'd be a nuisance."

Catherine asked how he was going to loaf and work too.

"Oh, I get up early in the morning and work till lunch, and loaf the rest of the time, as a rule," Jimmy answered. "Sometimes I keep going, sometimes I don't work at all for two or three days. I'm an erratic bird."

"Genius is often erratic," Catherine suggested, at which Jimmy grinned. "That doesn't make any difference," she went on. "You can have two rooms on the third floor and use one of them to work in to your heart's content. What are you writing?"

"A novel or something," Jimmy said.

"About what?"

"I'm not quite sure. It started out to be a treatise on economic conditions, but it looks to me as though it were becoming a dissertation on woman. Both are a little out of my line and I guess it will fall between two stools."

She had been there for an hour when she heard some one behind her speak.

"Never mind what it turns out to be, you simply must come," Catherine insisted. Charley backed her up and eventually Jimmy gave in. Jimmy had intended to give in from the beginning if the Wests showed enough sincerity and enthusiasm.

A FEW days later Catherine met Anne Cross at the Lanning Club, where the women were having a golf tournament. Anne's home was in Alden, but she was a bird of passage; she spent summers here and winters there and traveled about between times. She played golf well and had a way of going where golf competition was to be had. During the war she had done valiant work, a good deal of it being ambulance-driving, sometimes under fire, which caused a lot of people who had thought Anne was rather useless and a society gad-about to change their minds. Men who knew said that she had done a man's work and done it damn well.

Anne was tall and Anne was a little thin; undoubtedly a little greater fulness of contour here and there would have added to her charm; but without covering up her physical weaknesses or exaggerating her good points she did very well as to figure. Her shoulders were broad and square, she stood very straight and held her head high, and there was a strong suggestion of grace and strength about her. She dres ed in a style which was all her own and which was inimitable; a great many women envied her, but few dared to make much of an attempt to follow her, for various reasons. She was dark, and her beauty was the sort that takes some knowing to appreciate; it lay more in her white teeth, in the movement of her lips and in the brightness of her eyes than in her features.

She and Catherine West had been friends from earliest childhood, and their friendship was in no way lessened by the fact that they had never descended to the rather sickening confidences and intimacy in which young girls so often wallow. Each had entire respect and a great deal of affection for the other. This afternoon they were together for perhaps half an hour over tea, talking of the doings of the day, before Catherine spoke of the immediate future.

"Are you coming to see me this summ r?" she asked.

"I'd love to, if I can," Anne answered. "When do you want me?"

"Suit yourself, my dear. It doesn't

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make any difference—chose your own time and come for as long as you like; there's always room."

"I'm afraid that it will have to be only a few days. I'm rather tied up." Anne then went into some detail, mentioning Maine, Newport and other places.

"Fit it in somehow," Catherine said. There was an interruption and it was some time before they were alone again. Then Catherine said: "Jim Evans is in town again. Have you seen him?"

"Is he really? I haven't seen him. Have you?"

"He came to dinner Tuesday," Catherine said.

"How is he? I haven't seen him for years."

"The same as ever. He's doing very well with his writing. Have you read any of his books?" Catherine asked.

"One or two. I wasn't terribly excited about them."

"I've read them all and rather liked them; they're not trashy, certainly. He's going to spend the summer with us. I had to promise to let him work every morning and whenever he wants to; whenever genius burns, I think he said."

"What is it, another book?" Anne asked.

"Yes, about women, modern women, I think he said; I'm not sure."

"Good heavens— What does he know about women?"

"He admitted that it was out of his line."

Anne smiled. "Fortunately for us it seems to be an interesting topic," she said.

"It wouldn't be so for long if all women had stony hearts like yours." Catherine's voice made the statement seem almost complimentary. "Is there a man on the horizon?"

Anne shook her head.

"What happened to Billy Newlin?"

"Oh, he's still hanging round." Anne smiled again. "He's persistent, if nothing else."

"Didn't you run across any probabilities, or even possibilities, in France?"

"Good Lord no! I forgot that I wasn't a man myself most of the time. There were too many of them in the raw."

There was another interruption and this time a permanent one, and there was no further chance to talk privately.

A WEEK later Anne called Catherine on the telephone.

"Do you really want me for a while this summer?" she asked.

"Of course."

"If you do, I can come, in August. I can get out of that Newport visit if I want to and I'd lots rather be with you."

"You know perfectly well I'd rather have you than any one. How long can you make it, all of August?"

"That would be rubbing it in—a couple of weeks, perhaps."

"What utter nonsense! I insist on the whole month."

"It's awfully sweet of you, Kit, but you've got to promise me one thing—I don't know Jim Evans is to be there."

"All right, but why not?"

"Simply because I've never chased a man yet, and I don't want him to get it into his head I'm doing it now."

Catherine said again, "What utter nonsense!" and added: "You couldn't do it; nobody'd believe it, no man who knew you, anyway."

"I hope not, but promise."

Catherine promised. She told Charley that Anne was coming and cautioned him to say nothing about it because Anne had to get out of another engagement to do it, and she didn't want it spread about that she was breaking that other engagement in cold blood, six weeks ahead of time.

She said nothing of Anne to Jimmy Evans till Anne was nearly upon them.

"ANNE CROSS is coming to-morrow, for August," Catherine told him. "You used to know her rather well, didn't you?"

"In a way, years ago, but I haven't seen her since—well, years ago. How is she, what is she doing?"

"Playing round now, but she did wonderful work in the war."

"So I understand. I heard about her over there, but I didn't run across her. Some of the men told me she was a marvel. Does she know I'm here?"

The question was asked casually and answered quite as casually.

"Not so far as I know. Why?" Catherine lied like a soldier.

"Oh, nothing, pure curiosity." Jimmy removed the ashes from his pipe. "I'm under the impression that Anne never fancied me particularly; in fact, I rather think she particularly disliked me. Perhaps I'm mistaken—I hope so."

"That's absurd. What did you do to her?"

"Nothing, so far as I know. Perhaps if I did she'll tell me and forgive me. If Anne is provoked when she finds me here and says so, let me know and I'll see that I'm called away unexpectedly. However, if I'm very good we shall undoubtedly get along splendidly—ten or a dozen years make a lot of difference."

Catherine was strongly of the impression that Jimmy was joking, though she didn't quite get the point. So far as she knew he and Anne had been very good friends years before, and she had never known of any trouble between them. The idea of a love affair gone wrong flashed through her mind, but she put it aside; neither one of them knew even the rudiments of falling in love.

She was content to say: "Don't talk rot. Be nice to her; she's a fine girl."

Jimmy promised to be as nice to her as he possibly could be.

Anne arrived just before dinner the next day and went directly to her room, emerging therefrom refreshed from her long ride on the train and gowned for the evening meal. She greeted Jimmy with outstretched hand and a simple "Hello, Jimmy! I'm awfully glad to see you again." She greeted Mr. and Mrs. Willis Pomeroy conventionally, Charley with some show of *camaraderie*, Archie Crane with cordiality, and was introduced to Miss Ellen James. Then they went in to dinner.

Jimmy sat between Catherine and the James girl, who had been there for three weeks or more. She was twenty-five, perhaps; about ten years younger than Jimmy. She was a buxom young lady; the signs were that in middle age she would be decidedly plump. She had a great deal of pale yellow hair, her face suggested extreme simplicity of character and perfect propriety. Her gown was modest in the extreme. She talked very little and that little indicated no sparkling wit. She was, of course, by far the youngest of the company, which may have accounted for her demureness. Anne, across the table, saw that she brightened up only when Jimmy spoke to her. She noticed, too, that they seemed to be on very good terms; there was a good deal of talk between them, in low voices and with much smiling.

No two women in the same walk of life could have contrasted more strongly than Ellen and Anne. The physical contrast was great, of course, but it went further than that. Anne was in no sense a chatterer, but she talked well and had plenty to say; she was a woman of broad experience and breadth of view; she was not in the least squeamish, but demanded that all questionable subjects should be delicately handled; she had self-confidence, courage and *savoir faire*. That night her gown approached to within an eyelash of immodesty and stopped there.

Ellen suggested domesticity; Anne suggested nothing of the sort. Anne wore earrings occasionally; Ellen never did. Anne smoked; Ellen did not. Anne, with Catherine, dominated the conversation; Ellen had no influence whatever upon it. Anne after dinner played auction, for a small stake; Ellen did not play auction at all. Anne played golf, rode and was generally athletic; Ellen cared nothing for sports, she played golf and tennis poorly. Anne seemed to have no enthusiasms; Ellen seemed to have many, though they were expressed in confidence and not in public.

ANNE'S lack of enthusiasm amounted almost to indifference, a mental shrug of her shoulders at whatever happened or whatever might happen. That first evening she treated Jimmy Evans as though she were not greatly interested in men in general and as though he were simply one of a thousand men she knew. Her attitude toward him was to all appearances exactly as it would be to a magazine, her handkerchief, a glass of water, a cigaret, her slipper, anything that was all in the day's work. Anne was a clever woman; not only was she experienced and skilled in the social arts, but she had an unusually keen mind, a quick perception and great intuition.

Notwithstanding the fact that no one saw a sign of it, she heard every word that Jimmy said, she saw his changes of expression all during the evening, she noted in complete detail every sign of his unquestionable friendship and understanding with Ellen James. She saw that they were on the best of terms; the girl's behavior would have proved that if Jimmy's had not; there could be no question but that Jimmy liked her immensely and that she liked him; it was further evident that they had secrets between them, not important ones, perhaps, but little ones, proving intimacy. Catherine had told her before dinner that Ellen and Jimmy had been there for three weeks and were very chummy.

Toward the end of dinner, with a purpose that was quite distinct from the simple telling of a funny story, Anne said:

"I had a pleasant moment in the station this afternoon when I was waiting for

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the train gates to open. I was on the edge of the crowd when a man, a nice-looking young man, came rushing up to me—I thought he was going to embrace me. He might have been a chauffeur or a clerk or something like that. He said he was *so* glad to see me and enthused generally, so loudly that the people around turned to see what it was all about. I didn't know him from Adam, and I suppose I looked at him rather blankly—anyway, he gathered that I didn't recognize him. Then he fairly shouted, 'You've never seen me before except in my pajamas, that's why you don't remember me.' Everybody in the place heard him, some of them giggled, one or two guffawed."

Anne smiled at Catherine, as though the situation had been ludicrous, but impersonal, as though the young man and the crowd had had their joke without her being there. Anne had told the story to Catherine and was apparently interested only in Catherine's solution of the riddle, but Anne was in reality watching Jimmy Evans and Ellen James. She wanted to know what effect the story had on Ellen, and how Ellen's reaction would affect Jimmy. She saw that Ellen was displeased, and that Jimmy did not think her displeasure ridiculous.

Anne, having learned what she had set out to discover, did not wait for Catherine to guess the answer. "Fortunately I didn't lose my presence of mind," she said. "I shouted right back at him, 'You were one of my boys in the hospital, weren't you? Of course I remember you,' and saved the day."

Anne, when she went to her room, undressed, lighted the reading-lamp beside her bed, took one of Jimmy's books from her trunk, got into bed, arranged the pillows and read—for not over five minutes. She tossed the book to the foot of the bed, put out the light and arranged herself for slumber. It was nearly midnight and she was tired, but she did not go to sleep for over an hour.

The next morning Jimmy did not appear until bathing-time. Anne herself slept late and contented herself with Archie Crane and a comfortable chair on the piazza until bathing-time. She noticed that Ellen found her entertainment with two of the West children and some others. The Wests and the Pomeroys were playing golf.

DURING the week that followed the household arranged itself in the most natural manner imaginable. Archie Crane played golf; he liked Anne, she liked him and she found him rather amusing; they were entirely congenial. Jimmy and Charley West played together a good deal, taking Pomeroy along; at odd hours, at meals and often during the evening Jimmy and Ellen paired off, usually where the lights were bright.

To live in the same house with a man for a month is a close association; a woman can not ignore the man completely. Anne made no attempt to ignore Jimmy, she made no attempt even to evade him, she was extremely pleasant to him, when others were about. It happened, however, that she never saw Jimmy alone, whereas she was alone with Archie Crane a great deal. Anne contrived to be alone with Archie, and she contrived to have Jimmy know that she was alone with Archie. At the end of the first week Archie's brand of humor had lost its charm, his sweetness of disposition had become cloying, and his lack of interesting ideas had become wearying. Anne was bored to death.

She had known that she would be if she saw much of him; she had known Archie very slightly, but she knew the type well. His humor consisted largely in making believe that everything was funny and in jumbling words. In so much as everything isn't funny, and as Archie jumbled words the same way every time, his humor didn't appeal for long. Anne had let it be known subtly that Archie liked her; she had seen to it that Archie should like her; further, she had let it be known, subtly, that she liked him, that she found him rather amusing, that they were extremely congenial.

She had stuck it out for a week and Jimmy Evans had shown not a single sign of interest in her or her congeniality with Archie.

ONE evening at the end of the week she saw Jimmy and Ellen James go out on the piazza after dinner while she was playing auction with Charley, Archie and Mrs. Pomeroy. An hour passed and Jimmy and Ellen did not return. During the next hour she turned over her place to Catherine, wandered into an adjoining room and slipped through a French window. She saw no one and walked noiselessly to the corner of the piazza. Then she saw Jimmy holding a burning match to his pipe. She watched him till the match went out; then he turned and recognized her white figure.

"Come look at the night, Anne," he said.

The night with its moonlit sea was quite worth looking at. She went toward him and he rose.

"Shall I get you a wrap?" he asked.

"I don't think so. I'll let you know if I'm cold. It *is* a wonderful night, isn't it? Have you a cigaret?"

Jimmy produced a box of cigarets.

"I thought you didn't smoke them," she said.

"I don't."

"Then—?" Anne stopped. There was something in Jimmy's voice, a sort of laugh, that made her stop. She changed the subject quickly. "I'm told you're doing very well with your writing," she said.

"Have you read any of it?"

"Yes—one or two books. I thought they were very good."

"Why didn't you read the rest of 'em?" he asked.

"Chance, multiplicity of interests, I suppose. I don't read much."

"Then the first one or two didn't appeal, naturally. I don't wonder—I'm not awfully proud of them. You were a brick in the war, Anne. I heard a lot about it, over there where it counts and, of course, over here too."

"It was worth while. You went through it, didn't you?"

"Safely and for the most part comfortably. I suppose some able-bodied men had to do newspaper work."

"Naturally." Then Anne changed the subject again. "Kitty tells me you're writing a book on woman."

"I was trying to make up my mind what it is about when you came along. It's going round in circles at the moment."

"I'm sorry I interrupted you," she said.

"I'm not. Did you get tired of auction?"

"A little."

"Are you fed up on Archie yet?"

Anne, for a single instant, lost her presence of mind and her self-control—she shot a quick, angry glance at Jimmy. Jimmy's eyes were on the moonlit water. "Archie's rather amusing," she said.

"For a few minutes a day, in company. He's a kind-hearted coot, but he's hardly your sort, I should think."

"Of course he can't hold a candle to you. That's why I hunted round for you. Would you like to do something for me to-morrow afternoon?"

"Anything in the world."

"I've got to go over and see the Lamptons at Westfield. Kitty doesn't have to and won't, and I don't want to take her car for the afternoon; Charley's going off in his for the day."

Jimmy's expression did not change one iota. "Just you and I?" he asked.

"Yes. Why?"

"Archie can drive my car perfectly well, you know."

"If you don't want to go, say so, Jim."

"I'd like nothing better. Shall we start right after lunch?"

"Yes, we'd better. Let me have another cigaret before we go in. How did you happen to have them?"

Jimmy gave Anne a cigaret and lighted a match and held it for her, cupped in his hands. "Oh, I thought you might want to run over to Westfield one of these days," he said.

The business of the cigaret would have meant nothing to a casual observer, but Jimmy's words cut Anne like a knife.

They drove off the next afternoon after lunch. An hour and a half later Anne found that the Lamptons were not at home; she left cards and her duty was done. They drove on and came across a club with a crowd about the tennis courts, and they stopped and saw some tournament matches. Then they had tea and a bite to eat and started home.

AS THEY neared the Wests', Jimmy said that it had been a very pleasant afternoon. "Quite like old times." he added.

"Quite," Anne said. "Do you remember the day we went to Seabright?" She spoke without thinking. Only the similarity of the drive and the tennis occurred to her.

"I do. As I recall it, we became engaged that night," Jimmy said.

"Yes, that's so; I'd forgotten that." Anne recalled the fact lightly.

"How long ago was it—ten years?"

"Yes, just that."

"And we were engaged for about ten days, a rather short engagement as those things go. I've often wondered why you broke it, not of course that you did break it, but why?"

Anne's eyebrows went up just a little.

"Why say a thing like that?" she said.

"Why talk about it at all? Why open old wounds? I suppose it would be better not to, but I admit that my curiosity has never quite died. My recollection is that we parted one evening, apparently in perfect harmony; I went away for three days and when I came back you were gone; you stayed away for a month and I couldn't find out where you were; you sent back to me in a neat package my letters, a

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photograph, a few trinkets and the ring, which you had, I believe, worn concealed about you somewhere, pending the announcement. Later on, you were never at home when I called you did not answer my telegrams, you never answered the telephone till some one else had discovered for you that I wasn't on the other end of the wire, and you returned my letters unopened. Eventually I came to the conclusion that you were through with me. I put your letters, photographs and your gifts to me into a safe-deposit box taken for the purpose and they are there yet; that is, I take it for granted they are; I have not opened it since. There is a note in my will that they are to be delivered to you on my death, or if I live longer than you do the letters are to be burned without being examined. It was a fancy of the moment. I've never bothered to change it."

"I'd destroy them if I were you—they are hardly pleasant mementoes," Anne said. "You never can tell what harm they may do."

She greeted Jimmy with a simple "Hello, Jimmy, I'm awfully glad to see you again."

"My executor is a hard-hearted, unsentimental trust company and will carry out the will to the letter."

"I wish you'd give me the letters—the other things are unimportant."

"I'd be delighted to—on one condition—tell me why you did it."

"As you said, why open old wounds?"

"To satisfy my curiosity. It hurt like hell at the time, Anne. If you had called it off face to face with me; if you had told me you were sorry, but that you'd made a mistake, I'd have understood easily enough; I'd never understood why you loved me, how you could love me in the first place, but I never could imagine what crime I had committed to warrant such drastic action."

Anne looked squarely and unemotionally at Jimmy. He brought the car almost to a standstill and met her gaze.

"I didn't know as much about men then as I do now," she said.

"Would it have made any difference if you had?" Jimmy asked, a little coldly.

"Not the slightest. You left me that night about eleven—we'd been alone, in the summer-house for about three hours. About two o'clock that morning the house—the hotel on Valley Road—was raided and——"

"Oh, yes, I remember." Jimmy's voice was well under control, though it was low and he spoke slowly. Anne's heart nearly stopped beating. It had taken all her courage to speak as she had, and she had done her utmost to let no trace of emotion creep into her words. She was trembling inwardly when Jimmy interrupted her.

"Oh, yes, I remember," Jimmy said. "It was a vile place, of course, a blot on the fair face of the countryside and it was annoying that a half-dressed man should have escaped the net, leaving behind a coat with my name in it. But then, that sort of thing sometimes happens, and gossips never miss an opportunity to revel in such dainty morsels." Jimmy was driving fast again. "Curious, I never thought of that being it," he said; "it never occurred to me that you'd even heard of it. I'll send you the letters as soon as I get back to Alden."

There was no time for Anne to say anything; they were at the Wests' and the others were there.

DURING the week that followed Anne was hard put to it. She could not go baldly on with Archie, both because she was sick and tired of Archie himself and because she knew only too well that Jimmy Evans was laughing at her. Neither would she throw herself in Jimmy's way; for all her bravery, for all her ability to handle any situation which might arise, she could not give him the chance to ridicule her as she had done when she feigned great interest in Archie. She had satisfied his curiosity when she told him why she had broken her engagement to him, and he wanted nothing more. He had intimated when he made his short, quick explanation, calmly and with no anger, that she had made a grievous mistake. He had asked for no apology, he apparently wanted none; he had simply wanted his curiosity satisfied.

After their ride he treated her just as he had treated her before, courteously but casually, as though she were a pleasant enough but not especially interesting fellow guest. The West idea of hospitality was to furnish board and lodging and the facilities for amusement and then to let their guests do as they pleased. It was an excellent system. Jimmy fell in with it perfectly and it was entirely evident to Anne that he did not think of her very much; he made no effort to avoid her, but he certainly made no effort to be with her.

The episode of the drive had apparently made no difference in their relations.

So Anne threw herself on Catherine and Mrs. Pomeroy—she even tried to be friendly with Ellen James, but that young woman did not warm up. Anne thought that the girl was either a little in awe of her or for some reason did not approve of her. Accordingly Anne found her recreation with groups of men and women and not alone with any of the men. She saw Jimmy and Archie only when others were with them.

She tried to read Jimmy's thoughts, but he was too much for her; if he was not exactly as he appeared on the surface, she could discover no inkling of it. Ellen annoyed her; she was, Anne thought, rather stupid and yet it was perfectly plain that Jimmy liked her immensely and Jimmy assuredly fascinated her. Anne

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tried to fathom Jimmy's real feelings toward Ellen and was unsuccessful. She wondered if Ellen's attitude toward her was caused by her fear that she, Anne, might be her rival.

Slowly, day by day, and with infinite pains and employing all her finesse, she attempted to tease Jimmy, to rouse him, to call him to a combat of wits, to goad him into words or action, but she failed. She knew, and it made her blush, that Jimmy was as clever at the game as she was. He would not take the bait, though he let her know clearly enough that he was aware that the bait was there.

Then she chose to be frank. After lunch one day she and Jimmy were left alone for a moment. They were on the piazza steps and Ellen was playing croquet with half a dozen children on the lawn before them. Ellen was managing the game and there was much laughter, she herself was in high spirits and Jimmy was watching her.

"You like her pretty well, don't you?" Anne asked.

Jimmy turned his head slowly and nodded. "Very much," he said. Jimmy's eyes bored in a little.

"Serious?" Anne did not flinch under his gaze.

Jimmy gave his entire attention to his pipe for a moment and did not answer till he had lighted it. Then without looking at Anne he said: "It's not serious for her."

"I thought it might be."

"I happen to know that it isn't." A suspicion of a smile, a rather sad smile, Anne thought, came on Jimmy's lips.

"She's hardly your sort, is she?" Anne said.

"Just what is my sort, do you think?"

"Heaven knows any man's sort—ever, I suppose."

"At least I'm not playing Anne to her Archie," he said. Jimmy was laughing at her and it hurt.

"How unpleasant you can be when you want to," she said.

"That Archie business *was* a little raw, for you, don't you think so, Anne?"

"I've confessed, why don't you?" She wondered if she really had confessed before.

"What on earth is there for me to confess?"

"Are you having a good time with the girl for the summer, does she please the male vanity or—or what?"

"She pleases my male vanity mightily," Jimmy answered. "She is my idea of a charming, delightful, pleasant, amiable and—and very substantial girl, and she is kind enough to be nice to me."

"But is she—well—er—is she exactly exciting?"

"IF SHE isn't that must be one of her charms. What's the point, Anne?"

Anne stated the point frankly. "Are you going to marry her?"

"Does your interest lie in my direction or hers?"

"In yours, of course." Anne was able to laugh merrily. "You came within an ace of being my husband; you're the only man who ever did; naturally I'm curious as to what—as to who's husband you are—are going to be. That's reasonable feminine interest, isn't it?"

"I doubt if Ellen ever marries me," he said, and she had to make the best of his answer.

"You don't care much for women as a rule, do you?" she asked.

"Would you blame me if I didn't?"

"I imagine your book on the subject won't be overflowing with nice things about them."

Jimmy shrugged his shoulders. "That book is an enigma; I'm beginning to think it's too much for me."

"How much have you written?"

"All of it—none of it—I don't know yet."

"Will you let me read it—as it is?"

Two racing children interrupted them. "Please, Mr. Evans, take us sailing," they cried.

Jimmy thought it might be done.

"You come, too, please, Miss Cross," Ellen said.

ANNE bit her lip—and went. She went because in an instant she changed her mind and all her plans. She was going to be nice to Jimmy.

She began being nice on the sail when Ellen was forward with the two children and she was beside the tiller with Jimmy.

"I told you a fib a while ago," she said. "I've read all your books and all your articles I've run across. I've read the books twice and I like them immensely. I thought you'd be egotistical about them and I wasn't going to fatten up your vanity. I apologize."

"I wish you had stuck to your fib. I hear so much dishonest gush that the other thing is refreshing. Now you've joined the multitude. The lengths to which people will go in attempting to be pleasant is appalling. Most men and all women are liars—along those lines."

"I'm not, now. I'm sorry my opinion isn't worth more."

Jimmy's only answer was a smile and Anne was not sure whether it was sarcastic or not. It was as a whole a rather futile subject; the question of sincerity and critical ability made compliments uncertain in value. She knew it and talked about other things, but she kept the conversation on Jimmy and on the sort of items which men like to hear discussed. Jimmy was not enthusiastic, and countered by talking about Anne's experiences in France.

But Anne stuck to her guns, then and for a week thereafter. She ignored Jimmy's indifference to her and, again employing all the arts of which a woman is mistress and in which she was unusually proficient, she persisted in being pleasant to him. She made advances which she had never made to any other man and she arranged things so that Jimmy must cooperate with her or be positively rude, and Jimmy was never quite rude.

He accepted her attitude stoically; he still made no attempt to evade her; but there was about him a wee small suggestion that he was suffering but not complaining, and that to make him suffer could do no one the slightest good.

He submitted to her approaches meekly but with his everlasting lack of enthusiasm. He accepted her suggestions as to golf, rides, sailing, evening walks to other houses and as to all manner of other things, but he never made suggestions himself. Anne, with all the subtlety of which she was capable, made no attempt to separate him from Ellen, but took her with them whenever it was possible. Furthermore, she made every appeal to Jimmy which she was able to make. There was no hypocrisy in her, and when she did a thing she did it straightforwardly. Any man who was not blind and had any intelligence whatever must have understood what Anne was driving at; but Jimmy gave no sign of understanding—he was calm and impersonal.

But Anne gritted her teeth and stuck to her job; she trampled on her pride over and over again, and she saved her blushes for the privacy of her own room. The inner woman, the elemental woman, had conquered and overwhelmed the superficial woman, and the new Anne knew no shame.

She forgot all about Archie and he, finding her *camaraderie* gone and himself ignored, felt the spirit of the chase rise within him and tried to right matters. He suddenly discovered that he was in love and quite suddenly discovered that his love was hopeless; and as his love, as usual, was not deep-seated, he rather enjoyed his suffering. He was not clever enough to know that he had a rival and he thereby lost some of the fun that might have been his. Jimmy was certainly not in the field; even Archie could see that, and it never occurred to him that Anne, Anne of all women, could herself establish a rivalry.

Anne was never quite sure about her own rival, Ellen. She was sure that the girl had little mentality, that she was rather dull and uninteresting, but she had the bloom of youth on her, she had the face of a Madonna, and Anne was well aware that many a man had been won by nothing more than the modestly covered but perfectly apparent charms of a full, graceful figure. Ellen's simplicity and innocence might be a lure.

AT THE end of the third week Wayne Collins arrived at the Wests'. Anne had known that he was coming, but the fact had not been interesting. He was young, bashful and negligible, and when Anne first saw him he appeared entirely unimportant. It developed immediately, however, that he was there primarily because he was a friend of Ellen James, and that set Anne to thinking—the boy complicated matters. Ellen had lost to a great extent what had appeared to be a dislike for Anne, and Anne had wondered what the change meant. She had come to the conclusion that either the girl did not look upon her as a rival for Jimmy's love or that she herself had no serious interest in Jimmy. Neither supposition was satisfactory; the former was humiliating, being of necessity based on Jimmy's attitude toward her, Anne; the latter did not explain Ellen's original coldness. The only alternative was that Ellen had in the meantime become sure of Jimmy and therefore had nothing to fear from her, and that possibility worried Anne greatly.

The coming of the boy and Ellen's very evident regard for him confused her still more, until, on the day after his arrival, Ellen in a moment of thrilling confidence and overwhelming happiness told Anne, in secrecy, that she was engaged to marry Wayne, that they had been engaged for six months and that they weren't going to announce it, really, until the fall.

Anne hid her own emotion by putting her arms about Ellen and kissing her and congratulating her and telling her how much she appreciated being let into

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"How unpleasant you can be when you want to," she said.

the secret and so on and on, and promised never to breathe a word of it to a soul. She did not dare ask the child if Jimmy knew.

Afterward at dinner Anne tried to discover from Jimmy's face whether he knew and, if he did know, what he thought of it; but she could discover nothing. Jimmy was exactly as he had been for three weeks.

After dinner the lovers disappeared promptly, and Jimmy went off somewhere alone. At nine o'clock Anne, her thoughts a thousand miles from auction and the talk that was going on indoors, escaped. She went across the lawn to the beach and sat on a log of driftwood in the darkness. It was quite cool and she was wearing a thin black evening dress and had no scarf or cloak, but she was not cold. She had been there for an hour when she heard some one behind her speak.

"Anne?"

"Yes."

Jimmy came and stood beside her.

"Kitty's wondering where you are," he said.

"Sit down and talk to me. I need cheering up."

"Aren't you cold?"

"Not a bit."

Jimmy sat down, dragged forth his everlasting pipe and lighted it. That done, he said: "Has Ellen told you the big secret yet?"

"Yes. I imagine it's not going to be a secret long. When did she tell you?"

"Wayne told me a couple of months ago when he heard I was to be here."

"Then you knew him before he came here?"

"Yes. He asked me to be good to Ellen till he came. He's a Westerner; I met him in France and ran across him again in Alden. He's a nice boy."

Anne did not answer. She had clasped her hands about her knees and was gazing into the darkness straight before her through half-closed eyes. Her heart was beating fast, her pulses were throbbing, her lips were pressed close together. Jimmy was smoking his pipe. Finally Anne, summoning every ounce of her courage, spoke.

"Did you know I was going to be here at the Wests' when you told Kitty you'd come?"

"How could I? Kitty didn't know it, did she? Nobody knew it."

Anne's whirling brain, her emotion, had led her into a trap and she knew it, too late. Her only hope lay in a show of ignorance. She tried to speak calmly.

"I don't know, how should I?" she said. "When did Kitty ask you?"

"I don't remember exactly, but my guess is—I think it's more than a guess—that it was before she asked you and therefore before you broke your engagement for Newport to come here."

"Did Kitty tell you about that?" Anne took her medicine.

"Kitty never breathed a word of it. Charley told me and he asked me whether there was anything going on between you and me. Of course I told him there wasn't."

"I see."

Then Jimmy struck hard. "I took it for granted when I learned that you were coming here, where I was, that the old wound had healed, even if the scar was still there. I wondered, I admit, whether you had forgiven me my sin, whatever it was."

"Can you ever forgive me, Jim?"

"Forgive you! Forgive you for what—forgive you for throwing over a man who went straight from your arms to another woman's arms in a vile place like Smith's Tavern? Why do you ask forgiveness for that? I can not imagine respecting a girl who would do anything else."

"I was very young then, Jim."

"All the more credit to you."

"I was a fool, I should have known that—that—that you were not there."

"Was not the evidence conclusive enough?"

"I should have had faith—in the face of all the damning evidence in the world. When I came to my senses, it was too late. I was a fool—it nearly killed me—first to lose you; and then when I came to my senses and I knew that I should not have believed what I heard, when I knew that I was not worthy of you."

"It was a struggle between faith and pride, and pride won. I am not at all sure that I blame you."

Jimmy's voice was even and calm, it sounded as though the whole subject were of little interest to him and as though it were settled, as though there were nothing further to do or say. But Anne would not have it so. She knew that she must go on to the end through fire and water, no matter what the end might be.

"Can you ever forgive me—forgive me for not having faith?" she said.

"Yes, but I do not think that there is really anything to forgive. If you made a mistake—well—everybody makes mistakes, it's only human."

Anne's fingers fluttered upward from her lap, descended, and then rising again drew a handkerchief from the bosom of her gown. For an instant she held it against her breast, and then, ashamed to confess, she twisted it in her fingers in her lap. There were tears in her eyes and she could not stop them—they rolled down her cheeks and still she would not let him know. She waited for him to speak, waited for what seemed to her an eternity, but he did not speak.

She sat up very straight; her hands were clutching the log on which she sat; her head was high; her bosom rose and fell rapidly with her gasping breath; her eyes were fixed before her. Finally the moment came, her courage reached its height.

"Will you—take—me back—Jim?" She had spoken the impossible words. She waited, listening, in an awful silence.

"On what terms?" He did not move and his voice was cold.

"On what terms?" she muttered. Then she turned toward him. "Will you—take me back—and love me, love me as I was—ten years ago. I have not changed—I came here—to you—to make you love me again—I've waited so long. I couldn't wait—any longer. Can't you love me—again?"

The log of driftwood on which Anne had been sitting was very low; she slipped from it to the sand at Jimmy's feet.

Many men had made love to Anne and

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failed to win even a moment's hope for themselves, even one tear, even one regret from her. Men who knew her well had said that she had a heart of ice, that she was without emotion or sentiment, that she was an unnatural woman. They had never suspected that a fire raged within her heart.

Anne had confessed to Jimmy, laid bare her heart and thrown herself on his mercy, begging his love in the face of his indifference; she had braved his coldness; she had tried to discover in him some trace of his old love for her and had not found it. She was a woman who did not love lightly; her first and only love had grown and grown every day of the ten years during which she had waited for Jimmy to come back to her. Jimmy had not come back, and when the chance came she had gone to him. She had played all the tricks she knew to bring him to her and he had not come. Then she, whom people thought cold and heartless, confessed her love to a man who, she believed, did not love her. She was without shame; she gloried in her confession; in the same breath she implored his forgiveness and his love. Without his love life would be worth nothing; if she failed she would know that she had done all that she could do.

As she spoke to him, her last atom of self-control left her; the passion that had burned within her so long overwhelmed her; she slipped to the sand at his feet, her arm went about his neck, her hand touched his face, her head lay on his breast. She was his, to do with as he liked, to take or to cast away; she had made her supreme sacrifice.

She felt his arm go about her and she sank into the support he offered her and looked upward, but it was too dark for her to see his face. She waited, tortured by fear, for him to speak. Finally he spoke.

"You have asked me for my love, Anne," he said. "Do you love me?"

"I have always loved you. I shall never love any one but you."

"Thank God! You've come at last."

Anne knew, before she felt his lips on hers, that all was well for her at last.

It was true, she knew that it was true, but she wanted to hear him tell her so, again.

"Do you really love me, Jim?"

He laughed. "I almost forgot—after all these years." He fumbled in his pocket and took her hand and put a ring on her finger. "It's the same old ring, Anne. I've had it with me always, all over the world, ready in case you came back. It's the only thing that didn't go into the safe-deposit box."

"In case I came back, Jim? Did you know that I'd come back?"

"I've been waiting for you to come back—hoping, hoping against hope, for ten long years."

"Why didn't you come to me—if you loved me, why did you make me come to you, all the way—to the last inch?" The proud woman had been conquered and she reveled in her lover's conquest; she wanted him to tell her that he was her master.

"Was it pride, Anne, or was it wisdom?"

It was her turn to laugh. "I wonder if it was inspiration?" she said.

"It doesn't make any difference now—you're here, that's what counts."

"Yes, Jim, that's what counts—and I promise—to love—honor—" her voice fell to a whisper—"and obey—forever."

Dream Farm

By Robert P. Coffin

A SETTLE, a hearth, a wife to hold,
Plates to catch the firelight,
Bacon drying from smoky beams,
Corn to pop on a winter's night,
A window high enough for stars,
A trundle-bed for children too,
Bayberry candles for scent I want,
And a kettle that sings the evening through.

Old blue bowls for goldenrod
Or gentians or pink sweet-peas,
Or even the everlasting rose
When November strips the trees,
Pennyroyal for sake of health
And caraway seeds for cake
Or crinkly cookies. I would have,
Such as only my wife could ever bake.

A mouse, perhaps, to gnaw some holes
And show his twinkling beady eyes,
But near our bins he must not go,
For—if he does—he surely dies,
Two deep chairs of flowered chintz
Amply wide enough for two,
Plenty of old red oak to burn,
And golden cider sweet and new.

With these indoors I will rest content,
But a Jersey cow there'll surely be
To low at night at the pasture bars
When the clover is damp with the evening dew;
And pigs will be countenanced outside,
But they must not be too ready to squeal
And disturb our proud patrician ducks
With importunate wails for their nightly meal.

It isn't much I want to have—
Of course, a field for kidney-beans
And lettuce and peas and some other stuff
That will serve us for a mess of greens.
With these my wife and I will try
To get along, and work and give
Our thoughts and muscles enough to do
And our happy hearts a chance to live.

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Tiger Syrup

By Richard Connell

HIT? Could that boy hit? Plenty! His right was like a whizz-bang crashing into a gas-tank, and his left darted in and out like a snake's tongue. In all my twenty-odd years as a sporting editor in the big town I never saw a more promising-looking piece of ebony fighting machinery.

I had dropped in at Billy Quirk's training gym to see how the cauliflower crop was coming along, and to watch that crafty old trainer in the process of turning raw fighting meat into highly polished championship material.

My eyes swept the familiar scene. Then, out of the hurly-burly of panting torsos and whirling limbs, there seemed to pop one black figure, in startling contrast with the lighter-hued athletes about him. My eyes focused on the stranger and stayed focused.

He was the blackest thing I ever saw in my life—blacker than a crow at midnight, blacker than the interior of a whale, blacker than the cellar of the Mammoth Cave, blacker than black velvet. But it wasn't his color, so much, that made me, a hardened old sporting writer, stop and stare. It was his marvelous speed and the ease and power of his work. The boy was a cross between a panther and a blacksnake.

He was boxing a big, rough heavyweight about the size of a taxi-cab, and although he was only a middleweight himself, he was slamming the everlasting daylights out of the big fellow. He seemed to have everything a fighter needs—the science of Gans, the pugnacity of Walcott, the defense of Jack Johnson, the speed of Dixon and the wallop of Sam Langford. His long, cable-like arms, with their free play of muscle, permitted his knuckles almost to dust the ground as he walked. He had no neck to speak of. Directly on his powerful shoulders was set a head little bigger than a good-sized coconut.

He appeared to be only a kid, and when he caught me watching him a bashful sort of smile spread from ear to ear, showing about a hundred perfect teeth.

Old Jay Whalen, boxing editor of the *Morning Star*, had strolled in and stood beside me watching the work of the unknown black boy. Jay was an old-timer when John L. was a baby, and I turned to him for his opinion of the ebony warrior.

"Looks good to me," I said. "Who is he?"

"That's Coco Feeney," answered Jay, with a pull on his battered meerschaum, "and 'looks good' just about lets him out."

"Why? Isn't he as good as he looks?" I asked.

"Naw. No heart," replied Jay laconically.

Coco had just dropped the heavy with a sweet left hook, and his little round face was lit up with an expansive grin.

"No lack of heart in a wallop like that," I remarked.

"No heart, just the same," said Jay. "Funny. O. K. in the gym. Looks to be a world-beater. Get him in a regular ring—no heart. Tenth-raters beat him. Seems paralyzed. Or scared to death. Dub." Jay always talked like a telegram.

"You must have the wrong dope, Jay," I said. "Why, that kid Coco is a natural-born marvel. You must be mistaken."

"All right. See for yourself. He boxes Bo Clancy at the Olympic next Monday." And Jay, puffing smoke like a tramp steamer, sailed out of the gym.

II

I WAS at the ringside at the Olympic Club Monday night to see Coco in real action. I had made his acquaintance in the meantime, and had found him to be a good-natured, retiring, likable young fellow, with none of the bumptiousness that he might easily have had. Indeed, his modest demeanor was a plea ant relief after the swaggerings of the pugs that infested my office to have me publish a "defi," or to tell me what they'd do to Jack Dempsey if they ever got him in a ring. Coco was "fum Bummingham, Alabamah," and he had been a "stevedoah in de woah." He saved his money and supported his mammy in a style that was the envy of all the colored sisters in that part of Birmingham.

An elemental person was Coco, with a very limited vocabulary and few ideas. He worked hard at the gym, took good care of himself, and in those moments when he was not in active training he spent his time in the comparatively innocent occupation of walking up and down Lenox Avenue with other dandies of similar complexion, dressed simply but richly in a checked suit, with numerous small pearl buttons sewed on by a prodigal tailor, a purple and green shirt of almost silk, with collar to match, a tie that was orange where it wasn't red, a fuzzy hat, made, apparently, of canary-bird fuzz, and neat buttoned shoes whose creamy tops contrasted with their coffee bottoms. His crowning sartorial glory was his watch-charm—an enormous gold-mounted rabbit's foot!

As I sat at the Olympic ringside, I hoped that Jay Whalen had the wrong dope about Coco and his heart. His opponent that night, Bo Clancy, was a third-rater at best, whose principal ring assets were a concrete jaw and a wild swing. I figured he'd be a violet-scented cinch for Coco, with that rapier right and wicked left of his.

But Jay Whalen was right. When Coco stepped in, looking like a statue done in black marble, I saw at once that some strange change had come over him. He was apparently pop-eyed with fright. The bell rang, and Clancy at once tumbled into a clinch. I saw him whisper something in Coco's ear, and the effect was much the same as if he had landed a blow in a vital spot. Coco's knees seemed to bog down, his little face was wrinkled in an agony of dismay.

He looked beaten before the fight had really begun.

Gone was that darting, smashing attack that suggested the panther. Gone was that graceful, evading speed that suggested the blacksnake. He was just a badly scared darky on the run. Clancy, heavy-footed and without science, rushed after him and Coco rushed away. The black boy neglected a hundred openings into which he might have thrust one short, decisive punch, during the six painful rounds that followed. All his fighting skill had been left in the gym, that was clear.

By clinching, ducking, retreating, he managed to stay the limit, but Clancy, the third-rater, outfought and outpointed him by a mile. Billy Quirk sat in Coco's corner, and even his stern old poker-face couldn't conceal the disappointment he felt at the wretched showing of his pupil.

I was puzzled. In all my experience I had never known a case just like it. Was it lack of heart? Was it pure yellowness? Perhaps. Yet Coco in the gym mixed it gladly with the biggest and roughest that came along. What was it then?

I decided to look up Billy Quirk and find out. He must know. Billy had been a great, game little fighter in the bare-knuckle days, and, with fists pickled in brine to make them tough, he had fought to a finish many a time, on the turf, for a princely purse of fift dollars. Only a man who was a fighter at heart went in for the game in those days. To-day a good many boxers are merely financiers with good physiques and press-agents. Billy was in the game because he loved to fight, and I knew that he could spot a quitter, for he hated one. If Coco was a quitter, why, then, had Billy Quirk taken him under his wing and spent a lot of valuable time coaching him?

III

I FOUND Billy out on his little health-farm in Jersey, teaching his grandson, aged four, how to execute an effective left-jab. It was here that Billy spent part of his time, rebuilding fatigued captains of industry and depaunching bankers, professors and actors.

He came bounding toward me, a picture of health in white flannels, and gave me a hand-shake that felt as if I'd touched a live wire.

"Well, can I make a white hope outa yuh?" he asked. This was his stock joke with me, which he hadn't varied in the fifteen years I had known him.

"No, but you can tell me if you are ever going to be able to make a black hope out of Coco Feeney," I said.

I thought a slightly worried look flashed into Billy's tanned, incisive face as he answered my question by asking another.

"Well, wadda yuh think?"

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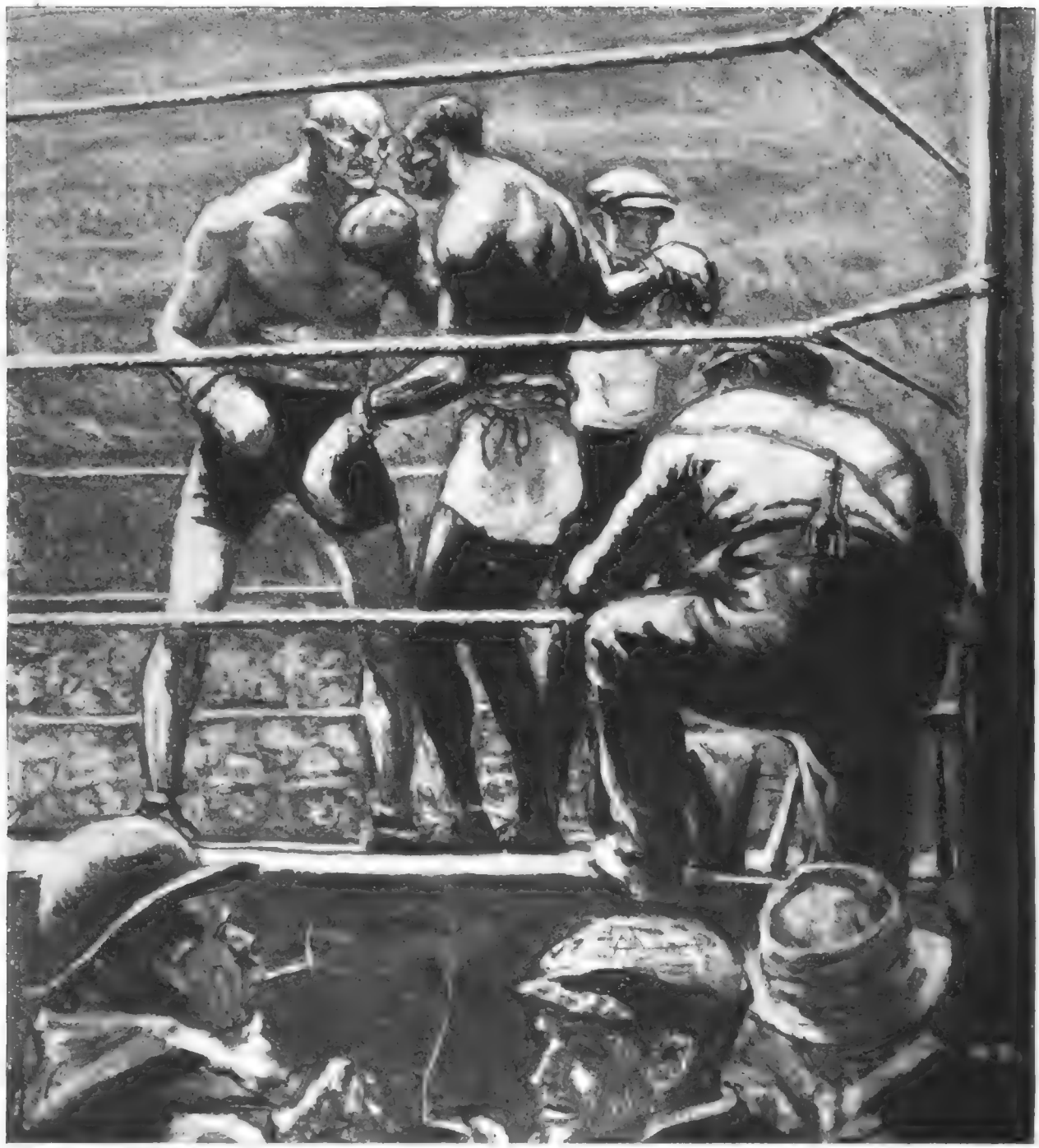

I heard Dad Finn, with a leer and a sneer, say: "Nig, I'm going to give some Birmingham undertaker a job tonight. . . ."

"Frankly, Billy, I don't know what to think about Coco. When I saw him in the gym, I thought he was a world beater. I thought you'd discovered another Joe Gans. But when I saw him in the ring against Clancy, he didn't seem to be the same man. He was terrible. I could have licked him myself."

"So yuh could, so yuh could," said Billy, unsmilingly. "That's just it. Anybody can lick him in the ring. But the champ himself couldn't do it in the gym. 'S funny, damn funny."

"What's the answer?" I demanded. "Is he yellow?"

"Naw, he's not. Don't yuh believe it. I don't have yella guys in my stable. Yuh know that. And I know a game guy from a yella one in the dark. That dinge is game, take it from me. It's sompin else."

"Well, what is it? Tell me, and I'll keep it mum, if you say the word. The boy interests me. He seems to have everything a fighter needs—yet he is a fizzle. The problem interests me, as a lifelong student of the fight game. Why is he such a lemon in the ring, Billy?"

The old trainer led me to a seat on the porch of his house and said: "I'll tell yuh. But, remember, I don't want nothin' published in the papers till I ive the word. Get me?"

I assured him that I got him.

"The reason Coco can't fight," he said solemnly, "is because he *thinks* he can't. An' that's the whole trouble."

He paused to light up a venerable corncob, and then went on: "I know that boy ain't yella. In the gym he's willin' to tackle any guy, no matter how savage he is. An' onst, in the street, a gang of young hoodlums, all bigger than him, jumped on him and started to kick the tar outa him. He coulda run away. But he didn't. He stood there and battled the whole gang of them. He'd knocked four of them cold, when I came along and stopped the slaughter. Yes, the kid's game. But in the ring it's sompin else again. Somebody got his goat onst and he ain't never got it back. This is how it happens.

"Several years back, when I was off in Australia with a bunch of fighters, I left Coco back here. He was just a green kid of eighteen then, hardly ripe for the prelims even, and I was coaxin' him along sorta gradual, because I could see that he had the real stuff, and would be a crackerjack some day. I had let him meet a lotta tenth-rate boys—set-ups they was—because I was matchin' him careful so that he'd develop confidence when he came to box the first-rate boys. When I left, I give

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him strict instructions to go easy and box only the soft ones till I got back. Well, I stayed out there longer than I planned to, and what does Coco do but make a match with Dad Finn. Or, what really happened was Dad Finn forces the poor, ignorant smoke into makin' a match with him.

"Yuh see, Dad Finn hates me like poison. I showed him up onct for the dirty crook he is, and he'd been schemin' to get back at me. You know what a sweet rep he's got. One of you sport-writers christened him the Guinea Pig, because he's a good thing to try experiments on. Yuh know, no fighter stands a chance of meeting the Champ until he first beats Dad Finn. Dad is a sort of gateway. He'll never beat the Champ himself, because he is too old, too fat and too slow, but he'll kill the hopes of a lot of ambitious boys, for he's one tough customer. That old bald head of his is full of dirty tricks. Believe me, there ain't a trickier bird in the game, unless it's his manager, Joe Fisher. That's a fine pair of yeggs for yuh and a disgrace to the game!"

Billy digressed a moment to relieve his feelings by language more vigorous than printable. "Well, Dad Finn knew that I had my heart set on making a top-notcher of Coco. And he thought he'd peeve me by getting to the boy while I was away, and busting up his fighting career. He knew, also, that he could never in the world beat Coco in a fair fight. So he and Fisher set out to get Coco's goat, and I must say they made a scientific job of it. Only the other day I got the inside story. I told it to a Columbia University prof who comes up here to improve his punch, and he says they used 'the power of suggestion.'

"Their idea was to beat Coco before he stepped into the ring by making him think he was a bum, and that he didn't have a chance to win. And they done it! That big rabbit's foot he wears was a tip-off to them. They soon sized him up for what he is—a simple-minded, superstitious darky, a believer in signs, omens, weejee boards, hoodoos and voodoos.

"You'd hardly believe the trouble them two crooks went to to scare all the fight outa Coco. First, they fixed it so that the mirror in the gym where he was trainin' should fall with a crash while he was lookin' in it. Seven years bad luck, of course, was what it meant to the poor smoke. Then they got a kid to dump a bag of black cats into Coco's dressin'-room, and, of course, some of the cats crossed his path. More bad luck. I got this dope from Turtle-neck Toomey, who used to be a sparrin'-partner of Dad Finn's but who reformed.

"THEN they sent him post-cards every day. They had skulls and bones drawed on them in blood-red ink, and the words 'COCO CAN'T FIGHT' printed on them. Every morning he got one of them. Anybody but a dumb-bell darky would have seen right off that it was a frame-up, but Coco fell for it. Can yuh imagine it? Two or three times a day some guy would call Coco up on the telephone. Sometimes they'd get him outa bed at two in the mornin'. The guy would say in a deep and awful voice, 'Is this Clarence Dillingham Feeney,' which is Coco's whole name. 'Yessuh,' Coco would answer—he's scared of telephones, anyhow. 'Clarence Dillingham Feeney,' the guy would rumble, 'thou art accursed. Thou can't fight in no ring. Thou CAN'T FIGHT.'

"I dunno why spooks is always supposed to say 'thou,' but that is what this guy used to say, and Coco begun to lose weight and look worried. Oh, how I wish I'd been here. But I wasn't, and the little fool was goin' it alone, with no mother to guide him, so to speak.

"They got to sendin' telegrams to Coco that would be delivered at midnight. Of course, y'know, a telegram always means bad news anyhow to a darky, and poor Coco would tear open the envelope, with tremblin' fingers, and then read 'COCO CAN'T FIGHT,' signed, 'THE EVIL SPIRIT.' Then he'd be too scared to sleep, and would lose another pound.

"HE WAS one hoodooed coon the day before the fight, when the two crooks got in their last and best piece of hellishness. They slipped some old gipsy fortune-teller five bucks, taught her what to say, and sent her around to see Coco. Now Coco has a great weakness for havin' his fortune told, and she had no trouble gettin' him to let her have a slant at his palm. The minute she picks up Coco's hand, she lets a yell outa her as if she's been stung by a wasp.

"'Oh, unhappy man,' she hollers. 'What is this I see?'

"'Good Lode, ma'am, what does yuh see?' gasps Coco, his teeth chattering.

"'I see that thou art accursed. Thy fight line is broke plum' in half. That means that thou can not fight in a ring. The minute thou puts up thy mitts against this here—what his name—oh, yes, Finn—thy eye will lose its cunnin' and thy arm will lose its punch. Oh, unlucky black man, Shish Kabab, Goddess of Swat, is angry with thee, and has told the Evil Spirit to put the triple curse on thee. Thou can never, never, never win a fight. Give it up, foolish Ethiopian, and go back to thy old trade of tossin' cotton bales into freight cars. For thou can never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never win a fight. I have spoken.'

"With that, she blows, leavin' Coco as pale as new tan shoes, which is some pale for Coco.

"When the poor kid stepped into the ring next night his goat was in Siberia. Dad Finn steps up to him as he sits in the corner, gives him a nasty glare, and says, 'Boy, what day's to-day?'

"'Hit am de tent ob May,' says Coco.

"'Well,' says Dad, with a scowl that would have curdled milk, 'on de tent of May next year, you'll be just one year dead.'

"When the bell rings, Dad stands up, rubbers around the crowd, and barks, 'Is there an undertaker in de house? I'll have a nice corpse ready for him in about a minute.'

"Poor Coco! He fights, so this Columbia professor tells me, subconsciously. An' at that he is almost as good as Dad Finn. But Finn has a jaw like a pavin'-block and when Coco lands, Dad just laughs and says: 'Nig, yuh couldn't lick your weight in cream-puffs. Do yuh call that a punch? Why, your punch wouldn't dent a derby hat.' Which doesn't encourage Coco none, for in his other fights, when he landed, the other fella usually showed that it hurt. Coco done the best he could—considerin' that his goat was gone. But when Dad shoots at him, 'Yuh blankety-blank hunka charcoal, I know that the Evil Spirit has got yuh hoodooed. Yuh can't fight,' Coco goes all to pieces, and Dad beats him pretty bad. This scrap takes all the heart out of the boy, for Dad was the first really good fighter he ever met, and it makes him think he's really a dub and an Accursed One, and he's just on the point of goin' back to Alabama to juggle cotton bales when I get home and persuade him to stick around and try another fight. I been workin' hard on him, and I thought he was pretty fit. But you seen him against that has-been, Clancy, and yuh seen how the old hoodoo worked. Clancy just whispers to him, 'Accursed one, yuh can't fight,' and Coco blows up. That's the story. What can we do about it?"

Billy Quirk and I spent the afternoon talking it over, discussing hoodoos in general, and scheming schemes, to regain the lost goat of Clarence Dillingham Feeney, ebony athlete. Finally, when it came time to catch the train back to town, I said to Billy:

"Next time that Columbia prof comes out here, why don't you put it up to him? He is prof of psychology up there, and maybe he knows something about the scientific method for recapturing a coon's goat."

"Mebbe I will," said Billy.

IV

A FEW days later I left for the Coast, to cover a lightweight championship, and, while I was out there, to take a bit of a vacation. It was some months before I got back. The first night after my return I dropped into the Olympic Club, without stopping to ask what the card of bouts was. The semi-final was just about to start. One of the contestants had already taken his corner, and was lolling there in a shrieking purple bathrobe, a look of unconcern on his battle-scarred face. It was Bo Clancy, and he looked in fit condition to put up the fight of his life. Then the second gladiator bounded through the ropes and I recognized Coco.

He hadn't changed, and yet he had. There was an undefinable something about his bearing that was different from the last time he had faced Clancy. He gave me a quick, slightly nervous grin. I watched him closely. His manner had a queer mixture of confidence and concern in it. He seemed to be waiting for something, as he sat while the referee introduced Clancy—for something besides the bell which would plunge him into the fight. His gloved hand kept slipping down and patting the pocket of his gaudy bathrobe.

He was introduced, and bobbed his head to the crowd. Then the tense moment before the gong came, and as he slipped off his bathrobe, he whipped from the pocket a small brown bottle of unusual shape, and raised it to his lips. As he took a short, quick drink, I saw him gasp, and I saw tears start to his eyes.

Replacing the bottle, he turned, at the gong, to meet Clancy, and I saw that some strange thing had happened. Ferocity blazed from his eyes. The fighting spirit of the cave-man defending his mate showed in his contracted face.

"Accursed One," sang Bo Clancy, leading with his left. "Yuh can't fight. The Evil Spirit's put the curse on yuh."

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"He has, has he," said Coco between his teeth, and countered with a right that staggered Clancy. Then the Coco of the ring became the panther-blacksnake Coco of the gym, and for concentrated fierceness of attack I've never seen anything to beat the way the little darky tore into his bigger opponent. Before the round was over he had knocked Clancy down twice, and had finally sent him hurtling through the ropes into the lap of a fat broker in the second row. Bo was out cold.

V

HERE was a mystery and a miracle. What had come over Coco? What had put a new heart into him, had transformed him from a dub in the ring to a smashing, tearing tornado? Could it be the stuff in that queer brown bottle? It looked that way. One gulp had changed him, apparently, from a nervous kid into a raging lion. Had Billy Quirk discovered some marvelous new fluid, some elixir of swat, so potent that one small drink would turn a lamb into a wolf?

I sought out Billy at his office in his town gym.

"Well," I said, "you certainly seem to have restored Coco's morale."

"If by morale yuh mean goat, you said a bucketful," replied Billy.

"How on earth did you do it?"

"I didn't do it."

"Who or what did it, then?"

He looked mysterious. "Tiger Syrup," he said.

"Tiger Syrup?"

"Yep, Tiger Syrup!"

Then he told me this story, after I had promised to keep it mum until he should be ready to have it known.

Coco, so Billy said, was just adjusting a necktie of artistic pattern, showing golden butterflies playing amid emerald-green leaves on a background of pink, in his dressing room in Quirk's Gym. He had been rematched with Bo Clancy, and he was training for the bout which was to decide for once and all whether he should continue in the ring, or, a beaten man, return to overalls and Birmingham freight-yards. As Coco gave a final pat to his horseshoe pin of imitation diamonds, three raps sounded on the door. Coco opened it. In stepped a gipsy—one of the gipsiest gipsies ever seen—aged, wrinkled, with earrings like saucers. Coco started back, and his eyes showed all white.

"'Yuh leave me be, gipsy,' he faltered. "I ain' done nothin' wrong. I doan expeck to win no fight. I'se gwine back to Bummingham, hones' I is. I knows I'se accussed, gipsy.'

"'Misguided and suspicious African,' says the old dame in a slightly Hibernian accent, 'how does thou get that way? I am thy friend, thou poor fish. Listen, here, you.'

"She grabbed Coco's hand. He was scared too limp to resist.

"'I see by this paw," she pipes, 'that Shish Kabab, Goddess of Swat, is no longer angry with thee. She will give thee back thy punch. She has sent thee this magic bottle of Tiger Syrup. It contains the most powerful potion known to man or devil. To make this quart bottle of Tiger Syrup, three hundred thousand savage tigers were boiled down. One swig of this stuff, Clarence Dillingham Feeney, and you are as fierce as three hundred and fifty-nine tigers. Just before you start to fight in the ring, take one swig of it, and no man can stand up against you.'

"'Oh, lady gipsy, is you tellin' me de troot?" gasps Coco.

"I art," says the gipsy. And she goes."

That afternoon, just before Coco started to spar with a heavyweight in the gym, Billy Quirk saw him take a drink from the brown bottle. He saw Coco's chest expand and his eyes dilate. In less than a minute, the heavyweight was battered down by the violence of Coco's assault. He had tried Tiger Syrup. It worked!

I listened, amazed, to this story.

"Billy," I asked, "what is this stuff?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Coco guards that bottle as if it were his life," he said, by way of reply. "He sleeps with it under his pillow. No chance to examine it."

I left the gym, mystified. A few days later I learned that Coco had been matched to meet Dad Finn again. Dad had a new lease on life, had done some strict training, and was doing the best fighting of his career. If Coco could beat him, the road of Billy's dusky pupil to a match with the champion was clear. But it is an old ring adage that "they never come back," and that if a man once beats another one he can always beat him thereafter. That bout will test Tiger Syrup, all right, I thought. And I made up my mind I'd see that scrap.

VI

DAD FINN kept Coco waiting in the ring a long time on the night of their second battle—an old trick to make a nervous man more nervous. When he finally stepped through the ropes, he gave Coco a glare that would have scared the Dead Sea alive. Coco tried to return it, and then dropped his eyes. From my ringside seat I could see little beads of perspiration form on his half-inch of brow.

"He's a beaten man, now," said Jay Whalen, who sat next to me. "Once yellow, always yellow." And I was afraid he spoke the truth. I shot a look at Billy Quirk, busy in Coco's corner. The old trainer looked serene, even cheerful. But Coco, without question, was in a funk.

When the referee was examining their bandaged hands, I heard Dad Finn, with a leer and a sneer, say: "Nig, I'm goin' to give some Birmingham undertaker a job to-night. I can lick all the hoodooed coons that ever lived. You ain't got a show. The Evil Spirit told me so."

Coco moistened dry lips as if to reply, but said nothing. I watched his knees and saw that they were trembling. I wondered how long Dad Finn would let him last. I feared that Finn, known for his cruelty and cunning, would beat up Coco before the eyes of Billy Quirk; would prolong the bout so that he could cut the frightened but game boy to ribbons, just to humiliate the man who had trained Coco. For I could see with half an eye that Coco was too rattled, too paralyzed by the old jinx, to do anything but take a beating.

The time-keeper hoisted his hand, ready to strike the gong. Coco suddenly turned to Billy Quirk, who handed him the queer brown bottle. Tilting back his head, Coco poured a big drink into his quivering throat. It half-blinded and half-choked him. Then, Bong! The bell!

It all happened so quickly that my trained eye could hardly follow it. From Coco's corner shot a black thunderbolt, a wild thing that hurled itself at the astounded Dad, and beat him back with a torrent of lightning blows. Dad, veteran of many an assault, clinched, but Coco shook him loose, and crashed home blow after blow. A more dismayed look I have never seen on human face than the look in Dad Finn's as he tried to protect his paving-block jaw from the torrent of punishing blows. He couldn't understand it.

"Accursed One!" he managed to rasp, as he clinched desperately.

"Rat!" replied Coco, and stopped Dad's oaths that followed with a stinging jab on the mouth.

Dad was wild. Desperate measures were needed. He clinched with Coco, and I saw his small, evil eye watching Slim Boyle, the referee. There was a fraction of a second of silence. It was pierced by a shrill cry from Finn's corner.

"Hey, Slim, look!" cried Joe Fisher, the manager of the beaten Dad. For just an instant the referee, caught off his guard, glanced toward Fisher. It was long enough. Dad shot home a foul blow. Coco's lips went ashen with pain. Billy Quirk let out a bellow of rage and protest. But Referee Boyle hadn't seen it. And just then the round was up.

Coco tottered to his corner, nearly out. In vain did Billy Quirk rub him, flap towels, plead with him. The blow had partly paralyzed him for the time. If he could not come up in sixty short seconds, the fight was Dad's. For once in his life, Billy Quirk was rattled. He bent over Coco, and I saw the boy's lips move. I have been to the movies enough to read lips sometimes, and I saw that Coco was saying, "Tiguh Syrup." Billy, rattled, had forgotten about it. He grabbed the brown bottle, pushed open Coco's mouth, and poured great gulps of it into the almost unconscious fighter. Then the bell rang.

Coco straightened up slowly, and stood in his corner, uncertainly, groggily. Dad Finn, leering horribly toward Billy Quirk, came rushing across the ring to finish his victim. Coco's head was slightly bent, and his fists automatically had assumed a fighting position.

Just before Finn reached Coco I heard Billy Quirk snap sharply: "Coco, you're a tiger!" And I saw Coco's muscles grow suddenly taut, and I heard the growl and snarl of a jungle killer. Nobody, least of all Dad Finn, knows exactly to this day what happened, because there was a movement of inky black arms and legs too fast to follow. A white, hairy body shot through space and landed, limp, half out of the ring, in the corner opposite Coco's. A terrific right to the solar plexus and a savage left to the jaw had knocked Dad Finn out, and the referee could have tolled a thousand seconds over his prostrate form.

VII

THE next morning I went around to Quirk's Gym to contratulate Billy and Coco on the dramatic come-back. Coco was home in bed, but Billy was there, in his little office, adorned with autographed pictures of scores of celebrities of the ring. He greeted me with a grin.

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When he was not in active training he spent his time walking up and down Lenox avenue with other dandies.

"Who said they never come back?" he asked, with a chuckle. "Ask Dad, he knows."

"Billy," I said, "I'm going to find out about Tiger Syrup."

Billy got up, carefully locked the door, and said: "Wait a minute, will yuh? I got to do a little chemistry."

From his pocket he took a queer-shaped brown bottle, identical with the one Coco carried.

From another pocket he took three smaller bottles. One was labeled "Aromatic Spirits of Ammonia," one was "Jamaica Ginger," and one was "Tabasco Sauce." He carefully mixed the contents in a wash-basin and poured the poisonous-looking result into the queer brown bottle.

"For the love of Mike, what's the idea?" I asked.

"Tiger Syrup," he said solemnly.

"Tiger Syrup?"

"Sure. But don't shout about it. Y'see, Coco's supply is runnin' low. I'm goin' to have to hire Maggie Turner, her that used to be in burlesque years ago before she bought a farm out near mine, to put on her gipsy make-up again and slip Coco another bottle. He's matched to meet the champeen in a month, and he'll need it."

"Do you mean to say that Tiger Syrup is nothing but spirits of ammonia, ginger and tabasco?"

"Sure. But with just a bit of imagination thrown in."

"And you got back Coco's goat with it?"

"Well," said Billy modestly, "I'll admit that it was my idea to call it Tiger Syrup, but the idea was really thought up by that professor up to Columbia."

"You mean Professor Garrison, the psychologist?"

"That's the baby. And here is a letter he wrote to me, after I put Coco's problem up to him." He handed me the letter and I read:

> The negro in question is undoubtedly suffering from psychological handicaps. It has been impressed on him by the power of suggestion that he can not fight. It must now be impressed on his brain, by the power of counter-suggestion, that he can fight. A possible method is to give him an evil-tasting, mildly stimulating fluid in such a way that he will believe it to have magic properties. His imagination will do the rest. A man who thinks he has fighting power is in a fair way toward actually having that power.

Billy shook the bottle thoughtfully. "Have a drink of Tiger Syrup?" he asked.

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UNDER THE SPREADING CHESTNUT TREE

AS MR. SMITH was looking through the paper, he was astounded to find an announcement of his own death. He went to the telephone and called up his friend Brown.

"Have you seen the announcement of my death in this morning's paper?" he asked.

"Yes," his friend replied; "where are you speaking from?"

ONE day an Irish gentleman walked into the Shelburne Hotel in Dublin and asked the clerk to guide him to room number twenty-four.

"I'm sorry, sir, but room twenty-four is occupied by Mr. Murphy."

"Oi know it is," the man answered. "Oi'm him. Oi fell out the window."

TO OBSERVE Washington's birthday in a fitting manner, a teacher in a Yonkers school told in detail the life of the first President of the United States. She emphasized his honesty, sincerity, bravery and self-reliance. At the close of her discourse, she put this question to the class: "What high office in a nation could such a wonderful man fill?"

A flaxen-haired boy of ten, sitting in a rear seat, raised his hand and blushingly replied: "He'd make a nice husband."

"TERRIBLY rough, isn't it?" said the stranger on the ocean liner.

"Wal," replied the man from the farm, "'twouldn't be so rough if the cap'n would only keep in the furrows!"

MANAGER, to patron who has ordered a mineral water and a plate and furnished his own sandwich: "Beg pardon, sir, but this isn't——"

"Who are you?"

"I'm the manager, sir."

"Well, I was just going to send for you. Why isn't the orchestra playing?"

EDITOR'S NOTE—Though the sign is the Chestnut Tree, no story is barred by its youth. We will gladly pay for available ones. Address all manuscripts to "The Chestnut Tree," enclosing stamped, addressed envelope.

"TALKING of hens," remarked the American visitor, "reminds me of an old hen my dad once had. She would sit on anything from a tennis-ball to a lemon. Why, one day she sat on a piece of ice and hatched out two quarts of hot water!"

"That doesn't come up to a club-footed hen my mother once had," remarked the Irishman. "They had been feeding her by mistake on sawdust instead of oatmeal. Well, sor, she laid twelve eggs and sat on them, and when they hatched eleven of the chickens had wooden legs and the twelfth was a woodpecker."

THE late Clyde Fitch, the playwright, was a collector of rare phrases. While touring the Hudson valley he stopped at a small country hotel for dinner and ordered beefsteak. The waitress returned, announcing: "The beefsteak is all over."

"All over what?" Fitch asked.

"All over with," was the reply.

A SMALL storekeeper to the surprise of his brethren suddenly decorated his window with a gorgeous new blind.

"Nice blind of yours, Isaac," quoth his neighbor.

"Yes, Aaron."

"Who paid for it, Isaac?"

"The customers paid, Aaron."

"What, the customers paid for it, Isaac?"

"Yes, I put a leedle box on my counter, 'For the Blind.' And they paid for it."

LITTLE Lydia had been given a ring for a birthday present, but much to her disappointment no one of the guests at dinner noticed it. Finally, unable to understand their obtuseness or indifference, she exclaimed:

"Oh dear, I'm so warm in my new ring!"

A SOCIETY woman wrote to an army officer at Camp Dix:

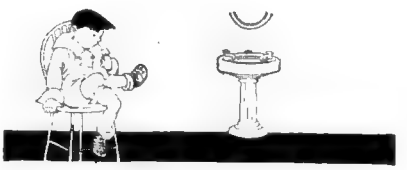
"Mrs. John Sears D'Voille requests the pleasure of Captain Smith's company at a reception on December fourth."

The next day she received this note of acceptance:

"With the exception of fourteen men who, I regret to say, have a week each in the guardhouse, Captain Smith's company accepts with pleasure Mrs. D'Voille's invitation for the fourth of December."

A MAN sent his bumptious son to college and in a month or so wrote inquiring how he was getting along in the grind of knowledge. He got this characteristic reply:

"Fine. Write often and ask me anything else that puzzles you."



CHARLES, being a man of five years' experience in this world, was considered old enough to perform his own toilet. On one occasion he was told to wash his very black knees. After he had spent considerable time in the bathroom, his mother thought inquiry necessary.

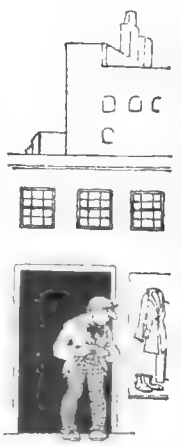
"How are you getting along, Charles? Have you got your knees clean?"

"No, not clean, but"—triumphantly—"I've got them to match!"

A GENTLEMAN with a taste for statistics applied to a life-insurance company for information.

"What class of people live the longest?" he asked.

"Centenarians," replied the actuary.



ISAAC owned a clothing store which nestled snugly sandwiched in between the clothing stores of Abraham and Moses. Needless to say, few customers ever got as far as Isaac's place, with Abraham and Moses in their respective doorways, and he was not prospering. Then, to rub salt in the wounds, both competitors decided to put him out of business and announced in flaming red across their windows: "Twenty Per Cent. Reduction On All Stock."

Not being able to meet the competition, Isaac was sorely perplexed for a time, but finally, in still brighter red and larger letters than the reduction signs, he painted across the door of his store:

"MAIN ENTRANCE."

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Mr. and Mrs. Pedestrian! Look out for cars without—

WEED Tire Chains

BE VERY CAREFUL whenever you cross a slippery street in front of oncoming motor cars.

Pedestrians take it for granted that all drivers have their motor cars under perfect control and can make quick stops whenever necessary and under all circumstances.

The speed of a vehicle moving toward you is very deceiving. If the driver happens to be one of those careless fellows who so often take chances without Weed Tire Chains, you are likely to be run down. Such a type of driver is powerless to stop in an emergency. He can apply the brakes—yes—but the car will continue its forward momentum or skid over into the curb—one never knows just where it's going to land.

When you consider that motor car accidents occur *even on dry streets*, you must appreciate how extreme the danger of crossing before cars operating on wet and slippery streets without Weed Tire Chains.

Suppose you slipped on the greasy pavement or stumbled in front of one of those chainless cars. In such event the chances are a hundred to one that *the most skillful driver* would not be able to save you.

When ALL motor vehicle drivers "Put on Weed Tire Chains whenever it rains" and use discretion in the manipulation of clutch, brakes and steering wheel to assist in meeting the uncertain surface conditions, then accidents under such conditions will practically cease to happen.

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The Slave

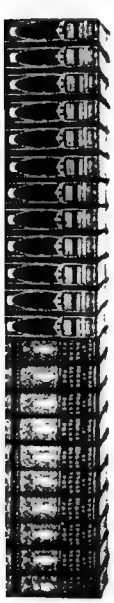
With all her strength she fought to get away from it all—the vulgar cabaret—the mysterious beauty parlor—the underground drinking-hell. Fiercely she had refused every bribe—resisted every temptation. And yet, when there came the chance to escape, she turned her back to it and stayed.

It is a plot so exciting—so marvelously planned—so brilliantly solved—that it could have been written only by the master detective

CRAIG KENNEDY
The American Sherlock Holmes
ARTHUR B. REEVE
The American Conan Doyle

He is the detective genius of our age. He has taken science—science that stands for this age—and allied it to the mystery and romance of detective fiction. Even to the smallest detail, every bit of the plot is worked out scientifically. For nearly ten years America has been watching this Craig Kennedy—marveling at the strange new, startling things that detective-hero would unfold.

Such plots—such suspense—with real, vivid people moving through the maelstrom of life!



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IF WINTER COMES

(*Continued from page 12*)

Chapter Three

Landmarks

I

ONE nature? In the fifth year of their married life thoughts of her, and of the poignant and tremendous adventure on which they were embarked together were no longer possible, while she lay in bed beside him. They had come to occupy separate rooms.

In the fifth year of their married life measles visited Penny Green. Mabel caught it. Their bedroom was naturally the sick room. Sabre went to sleep in another room—and the arrangement prevailed. Nothing was said between them on the matter, one way or the other. They naturally occupied different rooms during her illness. She recovered. They continued to occupy different rooms.

It was the most natural business in the world.

The sole reference to recognition of permanency in this development of the relations between them was made when Sabre, on the first Saturday afternoon after Mabel's recovery—he did not go to his office at Tidborough on Saturday—carried out his idea, conceived during her sickness, of making the bedroom into which he had moved serve as his study also. He had never got rid of his distaste for his "den." He never felt comfortable there.

At lunch on this Saturday: "I tell you what I'm going to do this afternoon," he said. "I'm going to move my books up into my room."

He had been a little afraid the den business would be re-opened by this intention but Mabel's only reply was, "You'd better have the maids help you."

"Yes, I'll get them."

"No, I'll give the order, if you don't mind."

"Right!"

And in the afternoon the books were moved, the den raped of them, his bedroom awarded them. High Jinks and Low Jinks rather enjoyed it, passing up and down the stairs with continuous smirks at this new manifestation of the master's ways. The book-shelves proved rather a business. There were four of them, narrow and high. "We'll carry these longways," Sabre directed when the first one was tackled. "I'll shove it over. You two take the top and I'll carry the foot."

In this order they struggled up the stairs, High Jinks and Low Jinks backwards and the smirks enlarged into panting giggles. Half-way up came a loud crack.

"What the devil's that?" said Sabre, sweating.

"I think it's the back of my dress, sir," said High Jinks.

"Good Lord!" (Convulsive giggles). "You know, Low, you're practically sitting on the dashed thing. You've twisted yourself round in some extraordinary way—"

Agonizing giggles.

Mabel appeared in the hall beneath. "Raise it up, Rebecca. Raise it, Sarah. How can you expect to move, stooping like that?"

They raised it to the level of their waists and progression became seemly. "There you are!" said Sabre.

There was somehow a feeling at both ends of the bookcase of having been caught.

II

SABRE liked this room. Three latticed windows, in the same wall, looked onto the garden. In the spaces between them and the two spaces between the end windows and the end walls, he placed his book-shelves, a set of shelves in each space.

Mabel displayed no interest in the move, nor made any reference to it at tea-time. In the evening, hearing her pass the door on her way to dress for dinner, he called her in. He was in his shirt sleeves arranging the books. "There you are! Not bad?"

She regarded them, and the room. "They look all right. All the same, I must say it seems rather funny using your bedroom for your things when you've got a room down-stairs."

"Oh, well, I never liked that room you know. I hardly ever go into it."

"I know you don't." And she went off.

But the significance of the removal rested, not in the definite relinquishment of the den, but in her words, "using your bedroom," the definite recognition of separate rooms.

And neither commented upon it.

After all, landmarks, in the course of a journey, are more frequently observed and noted as landmarks, when looking back along the journey than when actually passing them. They belong generically to the past tense; one rarely says "This is a landmark;" usually "That was a landmark."

III

THE bookcases were of Sabre's own design. He was extraordinarily fond of his books and he had ideas about their arrangement. The lowest shelf was in each case three feet from the ground; he hated books being "down where you can't see them." Also the cases were open, without glass doors; he hated "having to fiddle to get out a book." He liked them to be just at the right height and straight to his hand. In a way he could not quite describe (he was a bad talker, framing his ideas with difficulty) he was attached to his books, not only for what was in them, but as entities. He had written once in a manuscript book in which he sometimes wrote things, "I like the feel of them and I know the feel of them in the same way as one likes and knows the feel of a friend's hand. And I can look at them and read them without opening them in the same way as without his speaking one looks at and can enjoy the face of a friend. I feel toward them when I look at them in their shelves, well, as if they were feeling toward me just as I am feeling toward them." And he had added this touch, which is perhaps more illuminating: "The other day some one had had out one of my books and returned it upside down. I swear it was as grotesque and painful to me to see it upside down as if I had come into the room and found my brother standing on his head against the wall, fastened there. At least I couldn't have sprung to him to release

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him quicker than I did to the book to upright it."

The first book he had ever bought "specially"—that is to say not as one buys a bun but as one buys a dog—was at the age of seventeen when he had bought a Byron, the complete works in a popular edition of very great bulk and very small print. He bought it, partly because of what he had heard during his last term at school of "Don Juan," partly because he had picked up the idea that it was rather a fine thing to read poetry; and he kept it and read it in great secrecy because his mother (to whom he mentioned his intention) told him that Byron ought not to be read and that her father, in her girlhood, had picked up Byron with the tongs and burnt him in the garden. This finally determined him to buy Byron.

HE BEGAN to read it precisely as he was accustomed to read books—that is to say at the beginning and thence steadily onwards. "On the Death of a Young Lady" (Admiral Parker's daughter, explained a footnote); "To E——"; "To D——" and so on. There were 708 pages of this kind of thing and "Don Juan" was at the end, in the five hundreds.

When he had laboriously read thirty-six pages he decided that it was not a fine thing to read poetry and he moved on to "Don Juan," page 533. The rhymes surprised him. He had no idea that poetry—*poetry*—rhymed "annuities" with "true it is" and "Jew it is." He turned on and numbered the cantos—sixteen; and then the number of verses in each canto and the total—two thousand one hundred and eighty. *Who-o-o!* It was as endless as the 708 pages had appeared when he had staggered as far as page 36. He began to hunt for the particular verses which had caused "Don Juan" to be recommended to him and presumably had caused his grandfather to carry out Byron with the tongs and burn him in the garden. He could not find them. He chucked the rotten thing.

But as he was putting the rotten thing away his eye happened upon two lines that struck into him—it was like a physical blow—the most extraordinary sensation:

> The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece
> Where burning Sappho loved and sung.

He caught his breath. It was extraordinary. What the dickens was it? A vision of exquisite and unearthly and brilliantly colored beauty seemed to be before his eyes. Islands, all white and green and in a sea of terrific blue. And music, the thin note of distant trumpets. Amazing! He read on. "Where Delos rose and Phœbus sprung! Eternal Summer gilds them yet." Terrific, but not quite so terrific. And then again the terrific, the stunning, the heart-clutching thing. On a different note, with a different picture, colored in grays.

> The mountains look on Marathon—
> And Marathon looks on the sea.

Music! The trumpets thinned away, exquisitely thin, tiny, gone! And high above the mountains and far upon the sea an organ shook.

He said "Well, I'm dashed!" and put the book away.

IV

IT WAS years after the Byron episode—after he had come down from Cambridge, after he had traveled fairly widely, and luckily, as tutor to a delicate boy, and after he had settled down, from his father's house at Chovensbury, to learn the Fortune, East & Sabre business, that he began to collect the books which now formed his collection. His intense fondness for books had come to him late in life, as love of literature goes. He was reading at twenty-eight and thirty literature which, when it is read at all, is as a rule read ten years younger because the taste is there and is voracious for satisfaction: as a young and vigorous animal for its meals. But at twenty-eight and thirty, reading for the first time, he read sometimes with a sense of revelation, always with an enormous satisfaction. Especially the poets. And constantly in the poets he was coming across lines, the sheer beauty of which shook him precisely as the Byron lines had first shaken him.

His books appeared to indicate a fair number and a fair diversity of interests; but their diversity presented to him a common quality or group of qualities. Some history, some sociology, some Spencer, some Huxley, some Haeckel, a small text-book of geology, a considerable proportion of pure literature, Morley's edition of English Men of Letters, the English essayists in a nice set, Shakespeare in many forms and so much poetry that at a glance his library was all poetry. All the books were picked up at second-hand dealers in Tidborough, none had cost more than a few shillings; the common quality that bound them was that they stirred in him imaginative thought, they presented images, they suggested causes, they revealed processes; the common group of qualities to which they ministered were beauty and mystery, sensibility and wonder. They made him think about things, and he liked thinking about things; the poets filled his mind with beauty, and he was strangely stirred by beauty.

V

HERE, in the effect upon him of beauty and of ideas communicated to his mind by his reading—first manifested to him by the Byron revelation—was the mark and label of his individuality; here was the linking up of the boy who as Puzzlehead Sabre would wrinkle up his nut and say "Well, I can't quite see that, sir" with the man in whom the same habit persisted: he saw much more clearly and infinitely, more intensely with his mind than with his eye. Beauty of place imagined was to him infinitely more vivid than beauty seen. And so in all affairs; it was not what the eye saw or the ear heard that interested him; it was what his mind saw, questing behind the scene and behind the speech, that interested him, and often, by the intensity of its perception, shook him.

"Puzzlehead" they had called him at his preparatory school—Old Puzzlehead Sabre, the chap who always wrinkled up his nut over things and came out with the most extraordinary ideas. He had remained, and increasingly become, the puzzler. And precisely as he ceased to share a room with Mabel, and carried himself with satisfaction to his own apartment, so, by this fifth year of his married life, he had come to know well that he shared no thoughts with her; he carried them, with increasing absorption in their interest, to the processes of his own mind.

"My mind to me a kingdom is," wrote one of his poets.

In the increasing solitariness of his married life, his thoughts came to be something into which he could retire, as into a private chamber; which he could put on, as a garment: and in the privacy of the chamber, or within the sleeves of the garment, he received a sense of detachment from normal life in which, vaguely, he pondered things.

VI

VAGUELY—without solution of most of the problems that puzzled him, and without even definite knowledge of the line along which solution might lie, here, in these cloisters of another world—his own world—he paced among his ideas as a man might pace around the dismantled and scattered intricacies of an intricate machine, knowing the parts could be put together and the thing worked usefully, not knowing how on earth it could be done. "This goes in there, and that goes in there, but how on earth——?" Here, into these cloisters, he dragged the parts of all the puzzles that perplexed him: his relations with Mabel; his sense, in a hundred ways as they came up, of the odd business that life was; his strong interest in the social and industrial problems, and in the political questions, from time to time before the public attention.

He could be imagined assembling the parts, dragging them in, checking them over, slamming the door, and—"How on earth? What on earth?" There was a key to all these problems. There was a definite way of coordinating the parts of each. But what?

He began to have the feeling that in all the puzzles, not only, though particularly, of his own life as he had come to live it, but of life in general as it is lived, some mysterious part was missing.

That was as far as he could get.

He was like a man groping with his hand through a hole in a great door for a key lying on the other side. Nothing was to be seen through the hole, and only the arm to the elbow could get through it. Not the shape of the key nor its position was known. But he was absolutely certain it was there. One day he might put his hand on it.

Chapter Four

Sabre's Daily Ride

I

THE Penny Green Garden House Development Scheme was begun in 1910. In 1908, the year of the measles and the separated bedrooms, no shadow of it had yet been thrown. It never occurred to any one that a railway would one day link Penny Green with Tidborough and all the rest of the surrounding world, or that a railway to Tidborough was desirable. Sabre bicycled in daily to Fortune, East & Sabre's and the daily ride to and fro had become a curious pleasure to him.

There had once occurred to him, as he rode and thereafter had persisted and accumulated, the feeling that, on the daily.

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solitary passage between Tidborough and Penny Green, he was mysteriously detached from, mysteriously suspended between, the two centers that were his two worlds, his business world and his home world.

With its daily recurrence the thought developed: it enlarged to the whimsical notion that here, on his bicycle on the road, he was magically escaped out of his two worlds, not belonging to or responsible to either of his two worlds, which amounted to delicious detachment from all the universe. A mysteriously aloof, free, irresponsible attitude of mind was thus obtained; it was a condition in which—as one looking down from a high tower on scurrying, ant-like human beings—their oddness, their futility, the apparent aimlessness of their excited scurrying, became apparent: hence frequent thought, on these rides, on the rather odd thing that life was.

He was not in the least aware that so simple, so practical and so obviously essential a thing as his daily ride—as simple, practical and obviously essential as getting out of bed in the morning and returning to bed at night—was molding a mind always prone to develop meditative grooves. But it did develop his mind in the extraordinary way in which minds are molded by the most simple habits. On entering his Penny Green world, on the return home, or on entering his Tidborough office world, on the way out, he had sometimes a curious feeling of descending into this odd affair of life to which he did not really belong. And for the few moments while the feeling persisted he sometimes, more or less unconsciously, took toward affairs a rather whimsical attitude, as though they did not really matter; an irritating attitude, unpractical, it was sometimes hinted to him by his partners; an irritating attitude, "You really are very difficult to understand sometimes" it was often told him by Mabel.

II

MABEL was two years younger than Sabre, twenty-five at the time of her marriage and just past her thirtieth birthday when the separate rooms were first occupied. A habit of sudden laughter, rather loud, was rather characteristic of her. Her laugh came suddenly, and very heartily, at anything that amused her and without her first smiling or suggesting by any other sign that she was amused. And it came thus abruptly out of a face the expression of which was normally rather severe. Probably of the same mentality was her habit of what Sabre called "flying up." She "flew up" without her speech first warming up; but of her flying up, unlike her sudden burst of laughter, Sabre came to know certain premonitory symptoms in her face. Her face what he called "tightened." In particular he used to notice a curious little constriction of the sides of her nose, rather as though invisible tweezers were pressing it. She had rather a long nose and this pleased her, for she once read somewhere that long noses were aristocratic. She stroked her nose as she read the statement.

Her complexion was pale, though this was perhaps exaggerated by her coloring, which was dark. Her features were noticeably regular and noticeably refined, though her eyes were the least little bit inclined to be prominent; when Sabre married the Dean of Tidborough's only daughter it was said that he had married "a good-looking girl," also that he had married "a very nice girl;" those were the expressions used. She liked the company of men and she was much liked by men (the opinion of the garrulous Hapgood may be recalled in this connection). She very much liked the society of women of her own age or older than herself, and she was very popular with such. She did not like girls, married or unmarried.

MABEL belonged to that considerable class of persons who, in conversation, begin half their sentences with "And just imagine—" or "And only fancy—" or "And do you know—" These exclamations, delivered with much excitement, are introductory to matters considered extraordinary, and their users might be imagined somewhat easily astonished. But they have a compensatory steadiness of mind in regard to much that mystifies other people. To Mabel there was nothing mysterious in birth, or in living, or in death. She simply would not have understood had she been told there was any mystery in these things. One was born, one lived, one died. What was there odd about it? Nor did she see anything mysterious in the intense preoccupation of an insect, or the astounding placidity of a primrose growing at the foot of a tree. An insect—you killed it. A flower—you plucked it. What's the mystery?

Her life was living among people of her own class. Her measure of a man or of a woman was: Were they of her class? If they were she gladly accepted them and appeared to find considerable pleasure in their society. Whether they had attractive qualities or unattractive qualities or no qualities at all did not affect her. The only quality that mattered was the quality of being well-bred. She called the classes beneath her own standard of breeding "the lower classes" and so long as they left her alone she was perfectly content to leave them alone. In certain aspects she liked them. She liked "a civil tradesman" immensely; she liked a civil charwoman immensely and she liked a civil workman immensely. It gave her as much pleasure, real pleasure that she felt in all her emotions, to receive civility from the classes that ministered to her class—servants, tradespeople, gardeners, carpenters, plumbers, postmen, policemen—as to meet any one in her own class. It never occurred to her to reckon up how enormously varied was the class whose happy fortune it was to minister to her class and she would not have been in the remotest degree interested if any one had told her how numerous the class was. It never occurred to her that any of these people had homes, and it never occurred to her that the whole of the lower classes lived without any margin at all beyond keeping their homes together, or that if they stopped working they lost their homes, or that they looked forward to nothing beyond their working years because there was nothing beyond their working years for them to look forward to. Nor would it have interested her in the remotest degree to hear this. The only fact she knew about the lower classes was that they were disgustingly extravagant and spent every penny they earned.

III

MABEL was not demonstrative. She had no enthusiasms and no sympathies. Enthusiasms and sympathies in other people made her laugh with her characteristic burst of sudden laughter. It was not, as with some persons, that matters calling for sympathy made her impatient—as very robust people are often intensely impatient with sickness and infirmity. She never would say: "I have no patience with such and such or so and so." She had plenty of patience. It was simply that she had no imagination whatsoever. Whatever she saw or heard or read, she saw or heard or read exactly as the thing presented itself. If she saw a door she saw merely a piece of wood with a handle and a keyhole. It may be argued that a door is merely a piece of wood with a handle and a keyhole, and that is what Mabel would have argued. But a door is in fact the most intriguing mystery in the world because of what may be the other side of it and of what goes on behind it. To Mabel nothing was on the other side of anything she saw and nothing went on behind it.

A person or a creature in pain was to Mabel a person or a creature "laid up." Laid up—out of action—not working properly; like a pencil without a point. A picture was a decoration in paint and was either a pretty decoration in paint or not a pretty decoration in paint. Music was a tune, and was either a tune or merely music. A book was a story and if it was not a story it was "some stuff." A flower was a decoration. Poetry, such as:

> While the still morn went out with sandals gray,

was simply writing which, obviously, had no real meaning whatsoever, and obviously—well, read the thing—was not intended to have any meaning. A fine deed was fine precisely in proportion to the social position of the person who performed it. Scott's death at the South Pole when that was announced in 1913, was fine because he was a gentleman. The disaster of the colliers entombed in the Welsh Senghenydd mine which happened in the same year was sad. "How sad!" She read the account, on the first day, with the paper held up wide open and said "How sad!" and turned on to something for which the paper might be folded back at the place and read comfortably. Scott's death she read with the paper folded back at the account. She liked seeing the pictures of Lady Scott and of Scott's little boy. She read the caption under one of the pictures of the wives and families of the 429 colliers killed in the Senghenydd mine, but not under any of the others. The point she noted was that all the women "of that class" wore "those awful cloth caps"—the colliers' women just the same as the women in the mean streets of Tidborough Old Town.

She was never particularly grateful for anything given to her or done for her; not because she was not pleased and glad, but because she could invest a gift with no imagination of the feelings of the giver. The thing was a present just as a rasher of bacon was a rasher of bacon. You said thank you for the present just as you said thank you for the bacon. What more was to be said?

She reveled in gossip, that is to say in

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discussion with her own class of the manners and doings of other people. She thought charity meant giving jelly and red flannel to the poor; she thought generosity meant giving money to some one; she thought selfishness meant not giving money to some one. She had no idea that the only real charity is charity of mind, and the only real generosity, generosity of mind, and the only real selfishness, selfishness of mind. And she simply would not have understood it if it had been explained to her. As people are judged, she was entirely nice, entirely worthy, entirely estimable. And with that, for it does not enter into such estimates, she had neither feelings of the mind nor of the heart but only of the senses. All that her senses set before her she either over-valued or under-valued; she was the complete and perfect snob in the most refined and purest meaning of the word.

She was much liked, and she liked many.

IV

HER husband, Mabel, in her constant phrase, "simply could not understand." It was extraordinary to her how he seemed to invest the simplest things with some inner or particular quality which to her was blankly hidden. Even so simple and ordinary a thing as his daily bicycle ride to the office.

He made what she called a childish game of it.

Every day on the ride home Sabre ceased pedaling at precisely the same point on the slope down into Penny Green and freewheeled until the machine came to a standstill within a few yards of his own gate. This point of cessation was never twice in a week at the same spot; and Sabre found great interest in seeing every day exactly where it would be, and by intense wriggling of his front wheel and prodigious feats of balancing, squeezing out of the machine's momentum the last possible fraction of an inch. There was a magnificent distance record when, on one single occasion only, he had been deposited plumb in line with his own gate; and there was a divertingly lamentable shortage record, touched on more than one occasion, when he had come to ground plumb in line with the gate of Mr. Fargus, his neighbor on that side.

Each of these records, though marked by the gates, was also and more exactly marked by a peg hammered into the edge of the green.

This was childish and Mabel said it was childish when her attention was drawn to the diversion. On the day the great distance record was created he came rather animatedly into the kitchen where she happened to be. "I say, what's happened to that small wood ax. Is it in here?"

Mabel followed the direction of the convulsive start made by Low Jinks and produced the small wood ax from under the dresser, also directing at Low Jinks a glance which told Low Jinks what she perfectly well knew; namely, that under the dresser was not the place for the small wood ax. "Whatever do you want it for all of a sudden?" Mabel asked.

He felt the edge with his thumb. "Low—" Mabel's face twitched. He had persisted in the idiotic and indecorous names and her face always twitched when he used them. "Low, do you keep my ax for chopping coal or what?" And he addressed Mabel. "I'm getting fat, I think. I don't want the ax to cut lumps off myself, though. I'm going to chop a marking peg. I've done a heavyweight world's record on that run in on my bike——"

"Oh, that!" said Mabel.

And when he had gone out into the woodyard, Low Jinks staring after him with the uplifted eyebrows with which both sisters, the glum and the grim, commonly received the master's "ways," Mabel said in the gently pained way which was her admirable method of administering rebukes in the kitchen: "The woodshed is the place for the small wood ax, Rebecca."

Rebecca unsmirked her smirk: "Yes, m'm."

A little later the sound of loud hammering took Mabel to the gate. Across the road, at the edge of the green, Sabre was energetically driving in the peg with the back of the ax. He was squatting and he looked up highly pleased with himself and, as his words implied, with her. "Come to see it? Good! How's that for an effort, eh? Look here now. Yesterday I only got as far as here," and he walked some paces toward Mr. Fargus's gate and struck his heel in the ground and looked at her, smiling. "Absolutely the same conditions, mind you. No wind. And I always start from the top practically at rest; and yet always finish up different. Jolly funny, eh?"

She opened the gate for him: "What you can see in it!" she murmured.

He said "Oh, well!"

V

BUT on the following day he was surprised and intensely pleased to see his champion peg gleaming white in the sunshine. Mabel was in the morning-room sewing.

"Hullo, sewing? I say, did you paint my peg? How jolly nice of you!"

She looked up: "Your peg? What peg?"

"That record distance peg of mine. Painted it white, haven't you?"

"No, I didn't paint it!"

"Who the dickens—? Well, I'll just wash my hands. Not had tea, have you? Good."

When Low Jinks came to his room with hot water—a detail of the perfect appointment of the house under Mabel's management was her rule that Rebecca always came to the door for the master's bicycle, handed him the brush for his shoes and trousers, and then took hot water to his room—he asked her, "I say, Low Jinks, did you paint that peg of mine?"

Low Jinks colored and spoke apologetically: "Well, I thought it would show up better, sir. There was a drop of whitewash in——"

"By Jove, it does. It looks like a regular winning-post. Jolly nice of you, Low."

Two months afterward the bicycle did the worst on record. This was a surprising affair; the runs had recently been excitingly good; and when Low Jinks came out to take the bicycle he greeted her: "I say, Low Jinks, I only got just up to Mr. Fargus's gate just now. Worst I've ever done."

Low Jinks was enormously concerned. "Well! I never did!" exclaimed Low Jinks. "If these bicycles aren't just things! You'll

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"The Minority bitterly protest that 'all that was humanly possible' was *not* done."

All that was humanly possible

AFTER the fire in which those school children perished, after the heroism of teachers and firemen, after the official investigation and the report—how was the responsibility fixed? What reforms were recommended?

Did the report exonerate officials and attempt to clear the city of the disgrace?

Did it say; "*everything that was humanly possible was done to safeguard the school against fire; everything that was humanly possible was done to safeguard life from fire?*"

Did it point out that hundreds escaped and scores were rescued, thanks to the provisions of exits, stairways and a fire drill that half worked?

The fathers and mothers of the victims, the little sisters and brothers of the lost ones—a tiny minority perhaps—would like to cry out in protest and reproach. "Everything was *NOT* done that was humanly possible." The simplest, sanest, surest thing of all was not done. Grinnell Automatic Sprinklers would have put out that fire in the first three or four minutes. They would have put it out had it started in a closet instead of the basement; would have put it out no matter where, or how or when it started. The heat of the fire would have opened a head on the ceiling and brought down a torrent of water and saved our children. For with sprinklers, "when the fire starts the water starts."

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"All Right, Then—I'll Go To Hell!"

"It was awful thoughts and awful words, but they were said and I let them stay said."

It had felt good to be all washed clean of sin and to be able to pray—but Huck couldn't tell on old Jim no matter how sure it would make him of going to Heaven.

So he tore up the note and swore he would never reform again. He would steal Jim out of slavery, he would—and if he could think up anything worse, he'd do that too. As long as he was going to hell anyway, he might as well make it worth while. Who ever knew the heart of a boy as does

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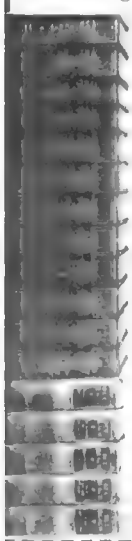

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want a peg for that, sir. Like you had one for the best."

"That's an idea, Low. What about painting it?"

"Oh, I *will*, sir!"

But he did not mention the new record to Mabel.

Chapter Five

Sabre's Friends

I

IT SURPRISED Sabre sometimes to find what a number of things there were which, profoundly interesting him, did not in the least interest Mabel, and were never mentioned by him to her. Little things like the pegging out of the bicycle runs; much bigger things like his work at Fortune, East & Sabre's in Tidborough and his special developments of that work. To the firm's business of church and school furnishing, designing and decorating, Sabre had added the publishing of educational text-books "for the use of schools." It had been his own idea. He initiated it, conducted it and carried it to success entirely with his own hand. Mr. Fortune, the head of the firm, liked it because it was profitable, but disliked it because he knew better than to interfere with it; Mr. Twyning, Sabre's fellow subprincipal—there was no longer an East in the firm—was jealous of it and hated it.

Two signally successful products of the publishing venture bore (one in collaboration) Sabre's own name. "Sabre and Owen's Elementary Mathematics" had been notably taken up by the schools. "Sabre's Modern History," shunned by the public schools in accordance with their principle of ignoring all history mellowed by fewer than three thousand years, had been received enthusiastically by the lesser schools wherein was dawning the daring idea of presenting to the rising generation some conception of the constitutional and sociological facts into which it was arising.

The tributes with which this primer of one hundred and fifty pages for eighteen pence had been greeted inspired Sabre toward a much bolder work on which the early summer of 1912 saw him beginning and into which he found himself able to pour in surprising volume thoughts and feelings which he had scarcely known to be his until the pen and the paper began to attract them. The title he had conceived alone stirred them in his mind and drew them from his mind as a magnet stirs and draws iron filings. "England." Just "England." He could see it printed and published and renowned as "Sabre's England." Kings were to enter this history but incidentally, as kings have in fact ever been but incidental to England's history. It was to be just "England;" the England of the English people and how and why. And the first sentence said so.

"This England" (it said) "is *yours*. It belongs to *you*. Many enemies have desired to take it because it is the most glorious and splendid country in the world. But they have never taken it, because it is *yours* and has been kept for *you*. This book is to tell you how it has come to be yours and how it has been kept for you—not by kings, or by statesmen, or by great men alone, but by the English people. Down the long years they have handed it on to you, as a torch is sent from hand to hand, and you in your turn will hand it on down the long years before you. They made the flame of England bright and ever brighter for you; and you, stepping into all that they have made for you, will make it bright and brighter yet. They passed and are gone; and you will pass and go. But England will continue. Your England. *Yours*."

II

MABEL called Sabre's school text-books "those lesson-books." After she had thus referred to them two or three times he gave up trying to interest her in them. The expression hurt him, but when he thought upon it he reasoned with himself that he had no cause to be hurt. He thought: "Dash it, that's what they are, lesson-books. What on earth have I got to grouse about?" But they meant to him a good deal more than what was implied in the tone and the expression "those lesson-books."

However, "England" was going to be something very different. No one would call "England" a lesson-book. Even Mabel would see that; and in his enthusiasm he spoke of it to her a good deal—until the day when, in its turn, it was definitely added to those other enthusiasms and interests which he had learned to keep to himself. He and Mabel had attended together the annual Founders' Day at Tidborough school, and as they drove home he spoke animatedly of the fine references to patriotism in one of the big speeches of the function.

"That's the sort of thing I'm putting into that book of mine. 'England's yours,' you know. Precious beyond price; and therefore grand to be making more precious and more your own. I wish you'd like to see how the book's getting on, would you?"

"What book?" The question was almost her first contribution to his flow.

"Why, 'England.' I told you, you know. That history."

"Oh, that lesson-book! I wish you'd write a novel."

He looked at her. "Oh, well!" he said.

III

AFTER that he never mentioned "England" again to her. But he most desperately wanted to talk about it to some one. There was no one in Penny Green from whom he could expect helpful suggestions; but it was not helpful suggestions he wanted. He wanted merely to talk about it to a sympathetic listener. And not only about the book—about all sorts of things that interested him. And indirectly they all helped the book. To talk with one who responded sympathetically was in some curious way a source of enormous inspiration to him. Not always precisely inspiration—comfort. All sorts of warming feelings stirred pleasurably within him when he could, in some sympathetic company, open out his mind.

He was not actively aware of it but what, in those years, he came to crave for as a starved child craves for food was sympathy of mind.

He found it, in Penny Green, with what Mabel called "the most extraordinary people." "What you can find in that Mr. Fargus and that young Perch and his everlasting mother," she used to say, "I simply can not imagine." He found a great deal.

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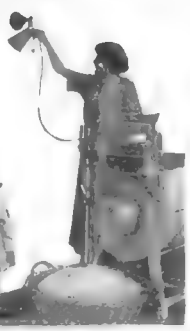

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IV

MR. FARGUS, who lived next door down the green, and outside whose gate the bicycle had made its celebrated shortage record, was a gray little man with gray whiskers and always in a gray suit. He had a large and very red wife and six thin and rather yellowish daughters. Once a day, at four in summer and at two in winter, the complete regiment of Farguses moved out in an immense mass and proceeded in a dense crowd for a walk. The female Farguses, having very long legs, walked very fast; and the solitary male Fargus, having very short legs, walked very slowly, and was usually, therefore, trotting to keep up with the pack. He had, moreover, not only to keep pace but also to keep place. He was forever getting squeezed out from between two tall Farguses and trotting agitatedly round the heels of the battalion to recover a position in it. He always reminded Sabre of a gray old Scotch terrier toddling along behind and around the flanks of a company of giant, striding mastiffs. He returned from those walks panting slightly and a little perspiring and at the door gave the appearance of being dismissed and trotted away rather like a little gray old Scotch terrier toddling off to the stables. The lady Farguses called this daily walk "exercise;" and it certainly was exercise for Mr. Fargus.

THE eldest Miss Fargus was a grim thirty-nine and the youngest Miss Fargus a determined twenty-eight. They called their father "Papa" and used the name a good deal. When Sabre occasionally had tea at the Farguses' on a Sunday afternoon Mr. Fargus always appeared to be sitting at the end of an immense line of female Farguses. Mrs. Fargus would pour out a cup and hand it to the Miss Fargus at her end of the line with the loud word "Papa!" and it would whizz down the chain from daughter to daughter to the clamorous direction, each to each, "Papa!—Papa!—Papa!—Papa!" The cup would reach Mr. Fargus at the speed of a thunderbolt; and Mr. Fargus, waiting for it with agitated hands as a nervous fielder awaits a rushing cricket ball, would stop it convulsively and usually drop and catch at and miss the spoon, whereupon the entire chain of Farguses would give together a very loud "*Tchk!*" and immediately shoot at their parent a plate of buns with "Buns—Buns—Buns—Buns" all down the line.

The Farguses kept but one servant, a diminutive and startled child with one hand permanently up her back in search of an apron shoulder string, and permanently occupied in frantically pursuing loud cracks, like pistol shots, of "Kate!—Kate!—Kate!" Each Miss Fargus "did" something in the house. One "did" the lamps, another "did" the silver, another "did" the fowls. And whatever it was they "did" they were always doing it. Each Miss Fargus, in addition, "did" her own room, and unitedly they all "did" the garden.

In this well-ordered scheme of things what Mr. Fargus principally "did" was to keep out of the way of his wife and daughters, and this duty took him all his time and ingenuity.

In his leisure from these flights Mr. Fargus was intensely absorbed in chess, in the game of Patience, and in the solution of acrostics. Sabre was also fond of chess and attracted by acrostics; and, regular evenings of every week were spent by the two in unriddling the problems set in the chess and acrostic columns of journals taken in for the purpose. They would sit for hours solemnly staring at one another, puffing at pipes, in quest of a hidden word beginning with one letter and ending with another, or in search of the two master moves that alone would produce Mate. (It was a point of honor not to work out chess problems on a board but to do them in your head.) Likewise for hours the two in games of chess and in competitive Patience, one against the other, to see who would come out first. And to all these mental exercises, chess, acrostics, and Patience, an added interest was given by Mr. Fargus's presentation of them as illustrative of his theory of life.

Mr. Fargus's theory of life was that everybody was placed in life to fulfil a divine purpose and invested with the power to fulfil it. "No, no, it's not fatalism," Mr. Fargus used to say. "Not predestination. It's just exactly like a chess problem or an acrostic. The Creator sets it. He knows the solution, the answer. You've got to work it out. It's all keyed for you just as the final move in chess or the final discovery in an acrostic is keyed up to right from the start." And on this argument Mr. Fargus introduced Sabre to the great entertainment in "working back" when a game of Patience failed to come out or after a defeat in chess. You worked back to the immense satisfaction of finding the precise point at which you went wrong. Up to that point you had followed the keyed path; precisely there you missed it.

"Tremendous, eh?" Mr. Fargus used to say. "Terrific. If you hadn't done that you'd have got it. That one move, all that way back, was calamity. Calamity!"

AND what attracted and interested Sabre was that the little man, living here his hunted life among the terrific "doings" of the seven female Farguses, firmly believed that he was working out and working toward his designed purpose. He had "worked back" his every event in life, he said, and it had brought him so inevitably to Penny Green and to skipping about among the seven that he was assured it was the keyed path to his purpose. He amazed Sabre, by telling him, without trace of self-consciousness and equally without trace of religious mania, that he was waiting, daily, for God to call upon him to fulfil the purpose for which he was placed there. He expected it as one expects a letter by the post. When he talked about it to Sabre, he positively trembled and shone with eagerness as a child trembles and shines with excitement before an unopened parcel.

One day Sabre protested: "But look here, Fargus. Look here, how are you going to know when it comes? It might be anything. You don't know what it is and—well, you won't know, will you?"

The little man said, "I believe I shall, Sabre. I've worked back for years, as far as ever my memory will carry, and everything has been so exactly keyed that I'm convinced I'm in the way of my purpose. I believe you can feel it if you've waited for it like that. I believe you're asked 'Ready?' and I want to say, whatever it is, 'Aye, Ready!'"

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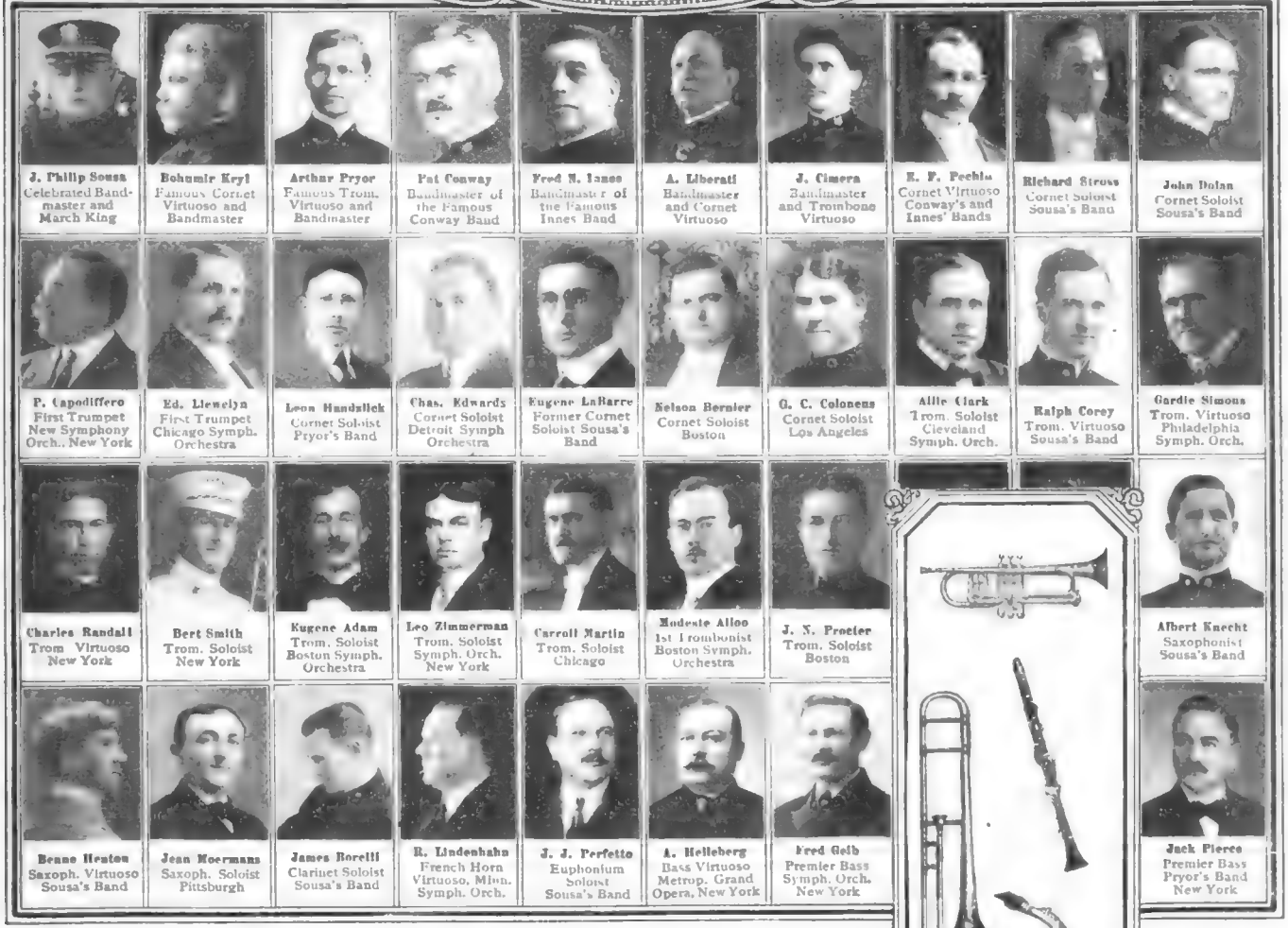
WORLD FAMOUS MUSICIANS WHO PLAY CONN INSTRUMENTS



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Leon Handsliek — Cornet Soloist Pryor's Band
Chas. Edwards — Cornet Soloist Detroit Symph Orchestra
Eugene LaBarre — Former Cornet Soloist Sousa's Band
Nelson Bernier — Cornet Soloist Boston
G. C. Colonens — Cornet Soloist Los Angeles
Allie Clark — Trom. Soloist Cleveland Symph. Orch.
Ralph Corey — Trom. Virtuoso Sousa's Band
Gardie Simons — Trom. Virtuoso Philadelphia Symph. Orch.
Charles Randall — Trom Virtuoso New York
Bert Smith — Trom. Soloist New York
Eugene Adam — Trom. Soloist Boston Symph. Orchestra
Leo Zimmerman — Trom. Soloist Symph. Orch. New York
Carroll Martin — Trom. Soloist Chicago
Modeste Alloo — 1st Trombonist Boston Symph. Orchestra
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Benne Henton — Saxoph. Virtuoso Sousa's Band
Jean Moermans — Saxoph. Soloist Pittsburgh
James Borelli — Clarinet Soloist Sousa's Band
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Mysterious and awful suggestion, Sabre thought. To believe yourself at any moment to be touched as by a finger and asked "Ready?" "Aye, Ready!"

Mysterious and awful intimacy with God!

V

AND then there were the Perches—"Young Perch and that everlasting old mother of his," as Mabel called them.

Mrs. Perch was a fragile little body whose life should have been, and could have been, divided between her bed and a Bath chair. She was, however, as she said, "always on her legs." And she was always on her legs, and always doing what she had not the strength to do, because, as she said, she "had always done it." She conducted her existence in the narrow space between the adamant wall of the things she had always done, always eaten, and always worn, and the adamant wall of the things she had never done, never eaten, and never worn. There was not much room between the two.

She was intensely weak-sighted, but she never could find her glasses; and she kept locked everything that would lock, but she never could find her keys. She held off all acquaintances by the rigid handle of "that" before their names, but she was very fond of "that Mr. Sabre," and Sabre returned a great affection for her. With his trick of seeing things with his mental vision he always saw old Mrs. Perch toddling with moving lips and fumbling fingers between the iron walls of her prejudices, and this was a pathetic picture to him, for ease or pleasure were not discernible between the walls. Nevertheless Mrs. Perch found pleasures therein and the way in which her face then lit up added, to Sabre, an indescribable poignancy to the pathos of the picture. She never could pass a baby without stopping to adore it, and an astounding tide of rejuvenation would then flood up from mysterious mains, welling upon her silvered cheeks and through her dim eyes, stilling the movement of her lips and the fumbling motions of her fingers.

Also amazing tides of glory when she was watching for her son, and saw him.

Young Perch, who was a horticulturist of some reputation, was a tall and slight young man with a happy laugh and an air which suggested to Sabre, after puzzlement, that his spirit was only alighted in his body as a bird alights and swings upon a twig, not engrossed in his body.

Young Perch always carried about in one pocket a private pair of spectacles for his mother and in another a private set of keys for her most used receptacles. When the search for her spectacles had exhausted even her own energy, young Perch would say, "Well, you'd better use these, Mother." It was of no use to offer them till she was weakening in the search and she would take them grudgingly with, "They don't suit me." Similarly with the keys, accepted only after prolonged and maddening search, "Well, you'd better try these, Mother." "They injure the lock."

Sabre often witnessed, and took part in, these devastating searches. Young Perch would always say, "Now just sit down, Mother, instead of rushing about, and try to think quite calmly when you last used them."

Mrs. Perch, intensely fatigued, intensely worried: "How very silly you are, Freddy! I don't *know* when I last used them. If I knew when I used them, I should know where they are now."

"Well, you'd better use these now, Mother."

"They don't suit me. They ruin my eyes."

YET Mrs. Perch, who confided much in Sabre, and who had no confidence of any kind apart from her son, would often say to Sabre, "Freddy always finds my keys for me, you know. He finds everything for me, Mr. Sabre."

And the tides of glory would flood amazingly upon her face, transfiguring it, and Sabre would feel an immensely poignant clutch at the heart.

Sabre was extraordinarily attracted by the devotion between the pair. Their interests, their habits, their thoughts, were as widely sundered as their years, yet each was wholly and completely bound up in the other. When Sabre sat and talked with young Perch of an evening old Mrs. Perch would sit with them, next her son, in an arm-chair asleep. At intervals she would start awake and say querulously, "Now I suppose I must be driven off to bed."

Young Perch, not pausing in what he might be saying, would stretch a hand and lay it on his mother's. Mrs. Perch, as though Freddy's hand touched away enormous weariness and care, would sigh restfully and sleep again.

It gave Sabre extraordinary sensations.

* * * * * * *

If he had been asked to name his particular friends these were the friends he would have named. He saw them constantly. Infrequently he saw another. Quite suddenly she came back into his life.

Nona returned into his life.

Continued in the January EVERYBODY'S.

IN THE next instalment of "If Winter Comes" some of the influences that are to work a profound upheaval in Mark Sabre's existence begin to assert themselves. In business there are the first signs of tension between himself and his associates. Mark develops an aversion for his wife's friend and counselor, that extraordinary clergyman, Mr. Boom Bagshaw; and Mabel watches with jealous distrust the renewal of her husband's friendship with his old love, Nona, wife of Lord Tybar.

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IN RED *and* GOLD

(*Continued from page 42*)

out an embroidered handkerchief from the pocket of her blouse and pressed it once or twice to her eyes, as with an air of determination, she talked on.

The narrative itself dealt with her girlhood near San Francisco, her chance meeting with Tex Connor, then a well-known character on the western coast of America, and her girlish infatuation leading to an elopement that she had supposed would end in marriage. Instead she found her life ruined. Connor had beaten her, degraded her, driven her into vice. She ran away from him; reached the China Coast; settled down with every intent to become what she termed, in his and her language, a square gambler.

"When I first took up with you last year, Jim, it seemed to me that at last I'd found a man I could tie to. You never knew my real feelings. I'm not the kind that tells much or shows much. I guess perhaps my life's been too hard. But—oh, Jim!—Well, you're seeing the real girl now. I'm pretty well beaten down, Jim. You never knew why I gave you the slip. I'll tell you now. I've got to tell you. It's for your own sake. You're in worse trouble than you know, right now. The cards are stacked against you, Jim. Your life even—" her voice broke; but she got it under control—"I've got to save you if I can."

Moodily he watched her.

"IF IT was anybody but Tex! He's merciless. He's strong. He never forgets. Listen Jim! I cut away from you because Tex came to Shanghai. He came clear from London to find me. And he found out about—us—you and me. He never forgets and he never forgives. Oh Jim, can't you see it! Can't you see that that's why he took you on—so he could watch you, keep you away from me? Can't you see what a game I've had to play? God, if you'd heard what he said to me back here this very morning—Oh, it's too awful! I can't tell you! He's so determined! He gets his way, Jim—Tex gets his way! Oh, what can I do?

"No, wait! I've got to tell you the whole thing. You said he was planning to cross me. He'll do that, of course. I don't think I care much about that. But you Jim—oh, you poor innocent boy! If you could only see! You'll never get your hands on one of the Viceroy's jewels."

She turned her face toward him. Her eyes now were swollen and wet with tears.

Jim, gray of face, held in his two hands a Chinese knife, balancing it. There were stains on the blade. He must have picked it up, she reflected, here on the junk. For it wouldn't be like him to carry such a weapon. It seemed to her then that he was holding his breath. She saw him moisten his blue lips with the tip of an ashen tongue.

He was trying to speak. At last his lips parted again. She waited. When the voice did finally come, it was so hoarse that he had evident difficulty in making it intelligible.

"Tex may be strong—but if you think I'm afraid——"

"Oh, Jim—no, I don't mean that!

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When you brush teeth in this way

This new way of tooth brushing brings five desired effects. Some are immediate, all are quick. A ten-day test, which costs you nothing, will clearly show you what they mean to you.

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It is the film-coat that discolors, not the teeth. Film is the basis of tartar. It holds food substance which ferments and forms acid. It holds the acid in contact with the teeth to cause decay.

Millions of germs breed in it. They, with tartar, are the chief cause of pyorrhea. So dental science has in late years sought ways to fight that film.

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Not that! Oh, I don't know what I'm saying! It's only when I think how happy you and I might be—think of it! really rich! able to go and live decently somewhere, like regular folks!"

Silently, with a surprising stealthy swiftness, he got to his feet. His right hand, with the knife, buried itself in a side pocket of his coat.

"Say the word, Dixie"—his face was contorted with the muscular effort necessary to produce this small sound—"say the word, and I'll kill him."

"Oh no, Jim!" she covered her face with her thin hands, and sobbed, very low. "Oh God, what can we do? Isn't there some other way?"

"Say the word," he whispered.

"Would it be—" she broke down again—"would it be—where a man's a devil, where he's threatened—wouldn't it be like defending ourselves?"

"Say the word!"

"Oh Jim—God forgive me! Yes!"

Her lips barely framed the word. But he saw it and turned. She watched him as he stepped around the coils of tracking rope on the roof of the steersman's pit; watched until he dropped softly down and disappeared.

IV

THEN, lying back, very still, she listened. But the oarsmen were chanting up forward, the lao-pan shouting; nearer, the steersman was singing an apparently endless falsetto narrative (as if there had never been bloodshed). The minutes slowly passed. She drew in the sweet exhalation of the tuberoses—still no unusual sound. She herself exhibited no sign of excitement beyond the hint of a cryptic smile and the white light in her eyes. Her shopping bag lay on her lap. Opening it, she looked at the bracelet-watch Jim had given her, that nestled close to a small triangular bottle of green corrosive sublimate tablets. The gentle wash of the current against the hull gave out a soothing sound. The slowly rising sun beat warmly down, and the polished deck radiated the heat. A sensation of drowsiness was stealing over her. For a short while she fought it off; but then, deciding that no anxiety on her part could be of value, she yielded, closed the bag on her lap, and drifted into slumber.

It was pleasantly hotter still. She felt her eyes about to open—slowly—on a presence. This languor was delicious. As an almost ascetic epicure in sensations she rested a moment longer in it, thinking dreamily of priceless gems heaped in her hollowed hands; of luxurious idleness in some exotic port—Singapore, or Penang (she had loved the tropical splendor of Penang), or in Burmah of India—Rangoon say, or even Lucknow, Lahore, and Simla. They would know less about her there. And with the means to operate on a larger scale she should be able to add enormously to her wealth. She decided to dress and act differently; make a radical change in her methods; play the woman.

Her lids parted. The presence before her—coatless, little cap pushed back off the low forehead—was Connor. He had pushed aside a flower pot to make a seat on the rail.

She closed her eyes again. He still wore the gray flannels and the white shoes with the rubber soles. It would be the shoes that had enabled him to approach without awakening her. He was smoking a cigar. And the face was wooden again save for his eye; that stared oddly at her. And she thought his breathing somewhat short, just at first.

She opened her eyes again.

"I've had a good nap," she said.

He smoked, and stared.

"Where's Jim?" she asked then; quite casually; raising herself on an elbow.

He made no reply; smoked on, still a thought breathless, fixing her with his eye.

"He brought me some breakfast, just before I fell asleep. What time is it?"

For what seemed a long space he did not even answer this; merely smoked and stared. She had never, sensitively keen as were her perceptions, felt so curious a hostility in Connor. She had hitherto supposed that she understood him, short as had been their actual acquaintance—her narrative of a past with him in America as related to Jim, was false—but the man before her now, sitting all but motionless on the railing, smoking with an odd, rapid intensity, holding that cold eye on her, was wholly alien.

Finally he replied——

"It's afternoon."

"No!" She sat up. "Have we been going right along?"

"Right along."

She stood erect; covered a yawn; then with her thin hands smoothed down the wrinkled blue skirt about her hips.

"I look like the devil," she remarked. The thin hands went to her hair. "You haven't noticed any sort of a mirror in the cabin have you, Tex?"

He did not reply.

Faintly through the still air came a faint sound—a boom—boom—boom.

"What's that?" she asked sharply.

"Fighting around Hankow."

"We're not way up there?" She stepped to the side and looked out ahead. "There's a city!"

"Tom says it's Huang Chow!"

"Hello! We're there!"

He inclined his head.

"What are you going to do?"

"Tie up here."

She heard now other and more confused sounds. The junk was slowing down; working in toward the yellow shallows.

"NOW listen!" said he. She glanced at him, then away, apparently considering the quiet landscape; alien he was indeed, and hostile, his manner that of an inarticulate man struggling with a set speech. "Listen! You're smart enough. But I want you to understand I don't trust you."

"Don't you, Tex?"

"When I go ashore, you're to stay here—right here on this deck—where you are now."

"What's the big idea, Tex?"

"There'll be men to see that you do stay here. I want you to get this straight."

"Of course," said she, musingly, "you won't be able to rob me outright. You'll have to give me enough of a share to keep me quiet afterward."

He said nothing.

"But what's to prevent the crew from getting away with the junk. I'm not very keen about being carried off that way."

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"You needn't worry. I'm taking the master along with me."

He stood then; looked meaningly at her; then went forward. She noted that his two hip pockets bulged.

Slowly the long, narrow craft was worked in toward the land. Trackers sculled ashore in sampans and made the great hawsers fast to stakes. Then the crew, with a good deal of shouting and a good many casual blows, were assembled in the long well, forward of the mast, where they huddled abjectly.

Peeping around the steersman's house, Dixie contrived to take in much of the scene. There was quarreling among the soldiers. Tom Sung towered over them, shouting rough orders. The two men that were told off (she judged) to guard her and the junk appeared to be objecting to their part in the affair. Obviously there would be small loot here.

Connor came back over the deckhouse; stood angrily over her. She sensed the mounting brutality in him. For that matter, his sort and their ways with women were familiar enough to her. She had learned to take brutal men for granted. But it had not occurred to her that Connor would strike her.

However, he did. Knocked her to her knees; then to her face ; even kicked her as she lay on the deck. He was suddenly loud, wild.

"NONE o' this peeking around!" he cried. "Keep your eyes where they belong!" And left her there.

After a little she was able to creep to the rail and peer out through the flowers. Frightened members of the crew were sculling the sampans back and forth until at length the whole party, fully assembled, every man except the lao-pan armed, set off inland.

Beyond an unpleasant headache she felt no injury. She sat for a little while; then again looked forward. The two guards were on the deckhouse, talking excitedly together. While she watched they climbed down, shouted at the huddled crew, fired a careless shot or two into the mass of them that brought down at least one. At length two of the crew went over the side, followed by the soldiers. A moment later the sampan appeared moving toward the shore, the two soldiers loudly urging on the oarsmen.

Dixie, swiftly then, rearranging her disordered hair as she walked, went down into the cabin.

A corridor extended along one side from the lao-pan's quarters under the steersman's house—sounds of stifled weeping came from there, apparently a woman or a girl—forward to the open space amidships. The rooms, partitioned off, all gave on this corridor, the doorways hung with curtains of blue cotton cloth. Into one and another of these rooms she looked. There was bent-wood furniture and bedding in each—the latter tossed about. On the walls hung neat ideographic mottoes. The grillwork about the windows and over the doors was of a uniform and quaint design.

Connor had taken for himself the rear room. There she found, beneath the window, a heap of matting and bedding. Thoughtfully, deliberately, she lifted it off, piece by piece, exposing first a foot and leg, then a bony hand, finally the

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entire figure of what had been Jim Watson, known, of recent years, along Soochow Road and Bubbling Well Road as the Manila Kid. His clothing was slashed and torn in many places. About his middle, and about his head, were wide pools of blood that during a number of hours, evidently, had been drying into the boards of the deck. The neck, she observed, on closer examination, had been cut through nearly to the vertebræ.

During a swift moment she considered the gruesome problem; then carefully replaced the matting and the bedding.

She went forward then to the end of the corridor; paused to look in her shopping-bag, open the triangular bottle and drop a few of the green pills into the pocket of her middy blouse, under her handkerchief; closed the bag and stepped out on the low midships deck.

The sampan had just returned to the junk. The two soldiers were walking rapidly inland after Connor's party.

She let herself quickly over the side; stepped into the sampan; waved toward the shore. Meekly the cowed oarsmen obeyed the pantomime order.

She stepped out on the bank, very slim, almost pretty; tossed a Chinese Mexican dollar into the boat, watched, with a faint, reflective smile, the two primitive creatures as they fought over it; then walked briskly, not without a trace of cool elegance in her carriage, after the soldiers, lightly swinging her shopping-bag.

Continued in the January EVERYBODY'S.

Freight-Cars

By Thelma Stillson

ALL day long the cars go by
'Neath the sleepy autumn sky;
Frisco, L & N, they say,
B & O, and Santa Fé.

Rumble, grumble, clash and clank,
Creeping past the water tank,
Grim and dusty, car by car,
What a sorry lot they are!

Yet they carry wondrous things—
Stoves and bricks and coal and springs;
Garden bulbs and tires and chains,
Tractors for the Western plains;

Marble for the carver's tool,
Books to study in a school,
Dainty things from Spain and France,
Little slippers for a dance.

All day long the cars go by
'Neath the sleepy autumn sky,
But the open swinging door
Seems a gaping mouth no more:

It's an eye that twinkles—so—
"How much more than you I know!
While you stop and work all day,
I'm forever on my way!"

Always onward, leisurely,
All the world is mine to see;
Town and mountain, sea and pond,
Earth's eternal vagabond!"

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THIRD-SPEED TARRING

(*Continued from page 61*)

the Nipponese government. He had spent some time in the West seeking to establish a factory for the manufacture of a new electric meter which he had invented. He had filed a very satisfactory report with Bradstreet's at the time, then suddenly pulled up stakes and gone East. He had told Bradstreet's man personally that he intended finding some little town outside of New York where he would meet with no labor troubles.

The report corroborated to the last detail all which Markhim had told Arthur. What neither Bradstreet's nor Tarring knew, was that the stranger had spent several months before coming East perfecting that alibi, for just this reason.

The lease of the old Sagamon Woolen Company plant was signed on the following Wednesday. Negotiations proceeded swiftly, because the average Foxboro business man had been trained to watch out for the fraudulent promoter in the personality of some Rufus J. Wallingford type—a man who immediately incorporated a company and started unloading stock.

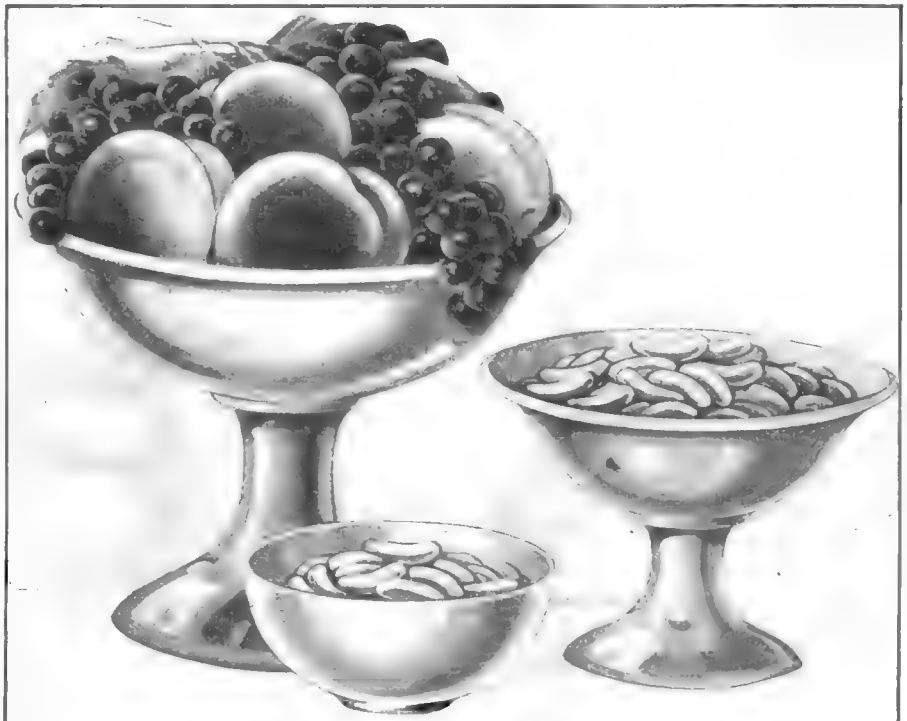
THIS man could not have been further from the Wallingford model. He was close-mouthed, unspectacular, one of themselves. He went about starting the new business in a quiet, efficient manner that inspired immediate confidence. And yet it is noteworthy that beyond signing the lease for the Sagamon Mill property, starting some inexpensive repairs on the water-wheel and purchasing a second-hand Ford roadster to facilitate his business trips about the village, nothing of real constructive effort took place between the time of his début in Foxboro and his dramatic exit.

By the end of the second week the community accepted him for what he had been reported and he became a familiar figure in the noisy roadster, chugging to and fro about the village. Discussion of him became only casual, mostly prognostications as to the probable time that would elapse before he wanted machinists.

Two things, however, took place in this intervening time, of which the village knew nothing. A mile up the Foxboro Center road is the old Whipple place. It is an abandoned farm and for half a mile there are no other dwellings. Blake Whipple, the undertaker down in Paris, closed the place when his father died but never removed the family furniture. The stranger learned of this place, made a secret trip to Paris and leased it, buying the crazy collection of furniture for a pittance. But his trips to the place were always at night and no one dreamed of the transaction.

The second thing was a trip he made down to Springfield. There he invested in a second-hand moving van. It came high, but he paid for it in cash. He had it registered under a Massachusetts license and drove it up into Vermont, entering Foxboro in the night and secreting it in the old Whipple barn. Three nights later all the furniture in the place had been piled upon it and bound down securely with a tarpaulin.

The stranger waited another week and then something happened. Arthur Tarring, at the bank one morning, was called



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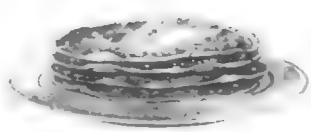

Now we mix ground Puffed Rice in an ideal pancake flour. Your grocer has it—Puffed Rice Pancake Flour. It is self-raising—batter is made in a moment. The Puffed Rice flour makes the pancakes fluffy and gives a nut-like flavor. You have never served a pancake so delicious. Try it now.

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Up from the Depths

The man had killed a man—he had met the girl—a stranger—at half-past one at Rooney's. A crisis came—and under the surface of shame, the souls of each stood forth to sacrifice—to a better, cleaner life. To O. Henry it is given to see beneath the outer darkness—to the soul within. It's not the truth a man tells, but the spirit in which he tells it that counts. That is why O. Henry can write of things not always told with a clean, high spirit. He tells of those who would rather suffer hunger than be bad—and the others.

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to the telephone for a most disturbing conversation.

The wheels of the machinery that Franklin had been months in constructing started slowly into motion.

"You're the cashier of the First National Bank?" The voice was strained, coarse and guttural.

"I am."

"Do you know who's speaking?"

"I'm sorry to say I don't recognize the voice."

"No, of course you don't—after what I've been through. Well, I'll tell you: it's Franklin speaking—Quigley F. Franklin!"

The alacrity with which Tarring came forward in his chair contradicted the nickname which the town popularly applied to him.

"*What!*" he cried.

"Yes, this is Quigley F. Franklin. I just got into your damned town this mornin' and learnt you was still in that bank. And I've took the pains to call you up because I want the satisfaction o' warnin' you beforehand what's goin' to happen and see you squirm."

"W-where have you been?" stammered Arthur aghast.

"Never you mind where I been, but I been away long enough so's you can't touch me. My crime's outlawed. I'm free from arrest but no thanks to you. And I'm goin' to tell you somethin'. I'm back to do you, Art Tarrin'—and do you good. I'm goin' to make you pay for what you did to me twenty years ago."

"What I *did to you!* What did I do to you?"

"YOU know well enough what 'I did to you'; I was strugglin' to build up a business; I was makin' deposits regular in your blasted bank; I was tryin' to be honest and build a business and a credit. I come to the place where a bank loan stood between me and failure. I asked you for that loan because you was assistant cashier then, and in charge o' the discountin' business. You turned me down and started all my troubles, and I'm holdin' it agin you. You deliberately put a premium on dishonesty. And all the time you been prosperin' and enjoyin' life while I been a criminal and a fugitive."

Arthur wetted his lips. His mind was in a whirl. Quigley Franklin of the famous Harrison forgery case back in Vermont—in Foxboro, at the other end of the wire! It was preposterous, a bolt out of the blue. Then it dawned upon him that some one might be playing a practical joke on him. He combed his brain for some question he could ask his correspondent that would prove by the correctness of reply that it was indeed Franklin. After a half moment he demanded:

"If you're indeed Quigley Franklin, tell me something. When you and I were walking home with Madeleine Washburn the night of the high-school graduation, twenty-five years ago, what did Madeleine say to me as we parted at the corner of Pine and Cedar Streets?"

And the answer came back promptly: "She said: 'I won't marry any man until he's made at least ten thousand dollars!'"

It *was* Quigley Franklin then. For those had been the girl's words that sent one young man after the fortune (in those days) by the slow methodical route of a banking career, and the other into the

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spectacular experience of a short-lived manufacturing business. That the girl had rescinded her declaration and afterward married the unfortunate Quigley was immaterial.

"My God, Quig! What became of you after that—indiscretion of yours? Do you know that your wife died mostly of a broken heart?"

"Yes, I know it perfectly. She wouldn't have died if you'd let me have that bank loan."

"I couldn't do it, Quig. I told you so at the time. Your security wouldn't warrent such a loan, particularly as your business was tottering."

"But that loan could have saved it."

"That's debatable. It was taking a long chance, and bankers can't afford to take chances. It isn't our money we're handling, you know. If I'd had the cash personally I might have lent it to you for friendship's sake, even if Madeleine did marry you finally."

"Yes you would! Tell that to the Marines! You didn't lend it to me because you didn't approve o' my way o' doin' things; you were too small-bored and narrer-minded to go after big things in a big way and took that method o' gettin' back at those who did. All the hard work I'd done went for nothin'. I forged Harrison's note to save Madeleine's life, and even at that wasn't successful. And what did you do——?"

"I took care of her until she *did* die, anyhow," declared Arthur huskily.

"What's that to do? You loved her same as I did, once!"

Arthur's usually placid benevolent face suddenly flooded with righteous anger.

"You cad!" he cried. "You don't dare come in and say that to my face."

"Oh, yes I do—and maybe I will. I'm callin' on you, Art Tarrin', and when I leave I'm goin' to take somethin' away with me; I'm goin' to take away the money you refused me on that loan—that brung down all my troubles on me."

"I haven't got the money to spare and if I had——"

"Well, the bank has; it's the same thing."

"I can't borrow any money for you from the bank; there's a State law about such things."

"I ain't askin' you to borrow it. I'm goin' to take it."

"What do you mean?"

"CAN'T you understand plain American? I'm goin' to rob your bally bank—scuttle it, clean it out, end it permanently! But before I do I want you should understand my motive. I want you should know why I done it."

"You're going to *rob this bank!*"

"You heard me the first time. I'm goin' to get back at you for the dirty way you played it on me; I'm comin' in and clean up. I'm goin' to show you how your little two-by-four policy works out, and how you can't see beyond the length o' your own nose. And I'm callin' you up and announcin' it ahead o' time, for the satisfaction it's goin' to give me to know how you're worryin' over it between now and the time I pull it off. Get me? Maybe it's a boyish thing to do, but I'm goin' to have my little joke and be damned to you. Your policy and mine just don't hitch."

Arthur's face was white. There was a click as the connection had been broken.

grimness in the tone coming over the wire which admitted of no jokery. He set the telephone on the desk. He reached up into a pigeon-hole and brought down a pad. He picked up a pencil and wrote rapidly:

Man at other end wire talking with now declares is going rob bank; go up-stairs, telephone office, ask Central phone with which I am connected; get police after that instrument and talker; will hold him as long as can.

He tore off the slip quietly and motioned Miss Willard, who had overheard his part in the conversation and was standing near by with a puzzled frown. She read the message, and being a brainy woman, ran from the bank. The central telephone office was two doors northward on Main Street up over the Moore Clothing Store.

"I'm sorry you've returned feeling like this, Quig," went on the banker. "If you and I could only get together I'm sure we'd understand each other better. Out of respect for Madeleine's memory—the girl we both loved—you ought not to get smirched up in any more criminal business."

"You needn't worry over me. Keep your worries for yourself. I've lived the intervening time in a foreign country until my crime was outlawed. But I ain't forgotten. How could I forget? Maybe it's made me sort o' crazy and unballasted; but that's your funeral.

"When it comes right down to tacks, we'll see who's the better man. I had brains enough to get away without bein' caught before. I've got brains enough to scuttle that bank of yours now, stayin' away so's arrest wouldn't upset my plans. I'm tellin' you, Art Tarrin' that I got a way to clean you out against which every bank in America is helpless. And I'm goin' to do it. After twenty-five years o' ease and success, I'm goin' to make you feel what it's like to go to smash.

"The fact that I'm callin' you up and warnin' you don't cut no figger. You're as powerless agin me and my method as a new-born babe. Put on all the guards you want, wire up with a hundred burglar alarms and fancy systems. There ain't one that can stop me—no, nothin' exceptin' my personal arrest beforehand, and even if I should come into town this minute you couldn't arrest me, because you couldn't prove nothin' against me *before* the crime was committed."

"You realize, of course, that this threat is perilously close to felony. But what do you mean by 'coming into town?' Aren't you in town now?"

"No, I ain't!"

"Where are you?"

"That's for you to find out."

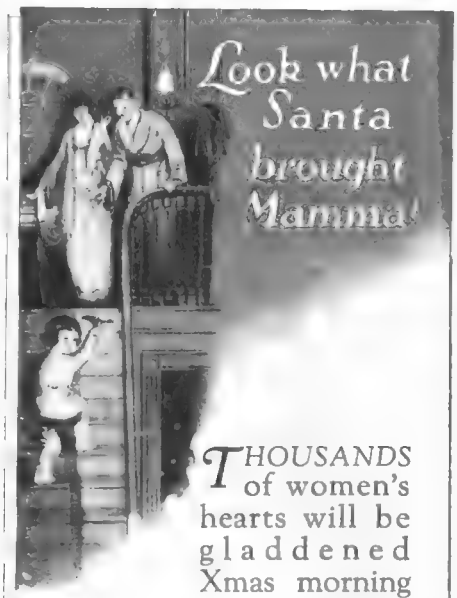
"When is this—this attempt on this bank—to be made?"

"Within the comin' week."

"You'll pardon me saying so, Quigley, but wherever you are—you're pretty much of a lunatic."

"All right, we'll see how much of a lunatic I am! I give you fair warnin' I'm goin' to scuttle your bank and make you eat crow same as I've eaten crow the last twenty years. Protect yourself if you can! Good-by, Art Tarring, and after your bally bank's wrecked through its inability to make good the loss, just remember how I felt twenty summers in the past!"

"Wait! Wait!" called Arthur a bit hysterically. But the receiver had clicked and Quigley was gone.



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A moment later while Arthur was frantically trying to get Central, Miss Willard entered the bank.

"We've lost him," she declared. "Mrs. Hooker says it was the Foxboro Center wire calling, and yet the Center operator we talked with over another one declares no one has been connected with us for over half an hour. That proves that your criminal had cut in with a field-set somewhere between here and there. What are you going to do? Call the police?"

"No," said Arthur slowly. "Not yet. I want to think. There isn't any doubt but that was Quigley, though I wouldn't recognize his voice after all these years anyhow. It's plain that he's become a monomaniac, fancying he's got a grievance against me. And he's going to rob the bank here within a week——"

"We ought to get a detective, inform the Pinkertons——"

"No; that'll cost money and there's no need to go to the expense. There are just two ways in which he can rob the bank. One is to get in at night and blow the vault, in which case the Western Union operator will get the burglar alarm. The other is by daylight—coming in here and holding us up at the point of a revolver. In that event he probably counts on taking us all by surprise and making a quick getaway, like the gunmen that have lately been operating around Brooklyn."

"BUT none of us want to get shot," protested the woman.

"No, that's true, none of us want to get shot." Arthur took a cigar out of one of the pigeon-holes and lighted it thoughtfully. The excitement of the first announcement past, he settled back into his life-long, painstaking, methodical rôle of "Third-Speed" Tarring. After a few moments of smoking he said quietly: "Poor Quig! After all, he was a victim of temperament. He wasn't content to build slowly and carefully. He wanted things to come his way too fast"

"But what are you going to do about it? Even if he's turned up as a lunatic, we can't endanger the bank funds and ourselves!"

"I know; I know! It's just a case of thinking something up to sort of checkmate him."

"I should say that if he's crazy enough and bold enough to call you on the telephone and announce his crime, we shouldn't lose an instant doing something about it."

"But that doesn't mean we ought to get excited over it."

"Seems to me this is rather a good time to get excited."

"I've got what I have, Florence, by being sure I'm right before going ahead. Maybe I haven't made an awfully spectacular success of life, but what I have done I'm sure of, and it won't crumble under me in a twinkling. And I can't alter my policy now. One thing at a time and go into it thoroughly—to the last detail—that's my motto. That's one of the reasons why I refused Quig's loan in the first place. I investigated his business so thoroughly that I knew it better than he did. I knew his new dye process wasn't sound. I saved the bank a big loss, even if he did deserve the loan on the face of his account. Don't lose any sleep over this, Florence. Let me do the worrying."

He puffed energetically on the cigar, regardless of the fact that he rarely smoked in the bank during business hours.

While this talk was going on, the Ford roadster belonging to the new president of the New Era Meter Company and driven by that official in person, was tearing into the community from a mile outside of town. It reached Main Street while Arthur was still smoking moodily behind the big plate-glass window. But its driver did not go as far down Main Street as the bank. He stopped the machine down a side street that left Main between the Opera House and the Methodist church. He brushed his clothes, pulled his hat down—a movement characteristic of the man of late—and went afoot to the bank.

"Morning," he said pleasantly in his natural voice to Miss Willard at the window. "I want to make out a draft on a New York bank for a couple of thousand dollars more to help along the construction at the factory."

Arthur did not come forward this time. He merely turned, noted the manufacturer and nodded. He had something of greater importance to think about.

Miss Willard helped him make out the draft, and concealed her agitation under a pleasant "Certainly," when the man requested that she notify him by phone at the Foxboro House when the money had arrived.

"He saw me turn up in the bank too quickly after that phone conversation to dream it was me he had just been talking with," he told himself on the sidewalk. "Now let him stew for a week. Then, by God, I'll have my pound of flesh with twenty years' interest!" And savagely biting off the tip of a cigar he retraced his steps to the waiting automobile.

III

AT TEN o'clock the following morning Arthur called his directors together. All night he had wrestled with the problem. He had decided as dawn broke that if danger threatened the institution it was his duty to tell them about it.

They gathered in the stuffy little room in the rear and were speechless when "Third-Speed" Tarring had finished his narrative. Old Colonel Campbell finally found his voice.

"And haven't you notified the police?"

"No," said Arthur, "I don't think much of Chief Allen's ability as a sleuth. Nor is he anything extraordinary in the matter of keeping his mouth shut. Before night the entire town would know that Quigley Franklin had threatened to rob the First National Bank. And how long would local people leave their funds with us? There'd be a 'run' that would ruin us."

"We ought to send to New York for a professional detective. Our subscription in the association entitles us to such service."

"The worst of it is, they might not take us seriously. No crime has been committed yet, you know. We might make ourselves ridiculous asking for help because some one called up by phone and informed us he intended robbing us. Thieves do not ordinarily do that sort of thing. It puts us in a rather embarrassing position; they'll declare we've got a case of nerves."

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"Do you think this Franklin means business?"

"I certainly do."

"Then are we to sit idly by and permit ourselves to be mulcted by an insane man?"

"No."

"Then what's the alternative?"

Arthur cleared his throat. He put his finger-tips very nicely together.

"I have looked into the various features of this possible attack upon us, and I have a plan."

The directors came at once to attention. Arthur had looked into the proposition. He had a plan. Excellent!

"Well," demanded Joe Randall, the shoeman, "what is it?"

"I am afraid I can not go into all the details at length. I must ask you to trust me. You see, the scheme which I have to checkmate Franklin depends on absolute secrecy—no one knowing anything about it but myself. Franklin remarked that he had a method for robbing us against which we were absolutely helpless. He may use stealth, he may use surprise, he may employ some new-fangled contraption like those we learn about in the movie serials but never find elsewhere. But he is only human, and the money can not be removed from the bank without human hands. So long as that is so, there is a solution to the enigma, regardless of what his method may be. I ask this board to put the matter entirely in my hands and to authorize me to expend three dollars and seventy-five cents in certain trifling bits of hardware which can come under no other head than protecting our funds from theft."

"Three dollars and seventy-five cents!" cried the old colonel, "to protect half a million in cash and securities? Have you gone raving crazy too, Arthur?"

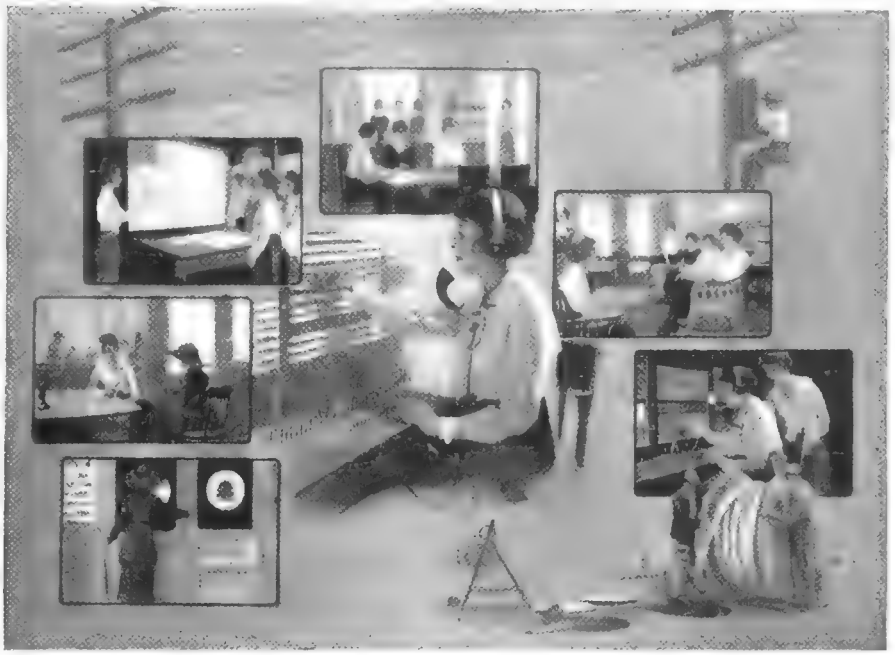
"No," the other returned quietly. "I have simply reasoned out that robbing a bank sucessfully, like building a bank successfully, is simply a matter of carefully working out the details. What I have done is to anticipate Franklin's details and add a few in counter-action myself."

"Spend the three-seventy-five! Spend twenty times three-seventy-five! Stop this man at all costs. We know he's capable of trying what he says he'll try because of what he's done already."

"VERY well," answered Arthur quietly. "I will undertake to save the situation. But if you want to avoid a run on us, tell absolutely no one about what I have related to you this morning."

They promised. But old Colonel Campbell, the president, had not been three minutes out of the directors' room before he broke his word. He went straight across the street and ordered two professional detectives to come on from New York at once.

Arthur put in an agonizing day. Every patron who entered the bank brought him up with a nervous start. No motor-car stopped out in front but what he saw it before it had come to a halt at the curb. He could not apply himself to business. Twice he took down the big .38 revolver whose handle protruded from a convenient pigeonhole of his desk, and examined it carefully. He hardly moved three feet away from his desk all day. He breathed in vast relief when three o'clock came and the bank was locked.



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Dave Babcock, Miss Willard and the assistant clerk left at four-thirty. The moment they were gone Arthur put on his hat and went down Main Street to Pine, and down Pine to Gus Levy's junk yard. He did not go to the hardware store for what he wanted because he could purchase what he wanted of Levy at a pittance. It was his laborious, economical way—one of the characteristics for which the free-handed, spectacular, hit-or-miss Bryant had grown to detest him years before, but which had become one of the cornerstones of his staid small-town success.

From Levy he bought two pieces of sheet-iron. He carried them himself to Jim Chamberlain's machine shop and waited while he had them cut into a peculiar pattern after a drawing he produced from his pocket. After the cutting was done, and the edges smoothed, he had one side of them burnished and, giving no explanation of what he wanted them for, he carried them back to the bank himself. On his way past the Morgan hardware store he went in and purchased a roll of strong heavy wire, something with which Levy had been unable to furnish him. He let himself into the bank, whose curtains were drawn.

It was ten minutes to ten when he finally lowered the big front shade, disclosing the bulb burning as usual over the vault, and he went home. But one of the things he had been careful to do was to remove all traces of his evening's workmanship. The only change which one familiar with the bank might recognize was the two plates of burnished metal which covered the time-worn surfaces under the two wickets in the bank partition, ostensibly to provide a hard wearable surface for the endless passing in and out of money. The only other incident connected with the bank's new protection scheme was the appearance before eight-thirty next morning of Fred Wickford and his crew of linemen from the town electric-light station. They worked most of the forenoon putting in a new cable in the rear of the building, and generally overhauling the burglar system connected with the Western Union office.

WHEN they finally pronounced their job completed and drove away, Arthur breathed in relief. Throughout the rest of that day he gave no heed to standing by his desk awaiting the attack. He reasoned that his scheme was infallible; it simply could not go wrong. Regardless of the method of attack, he felt reasonably certain that the bank was fully protected—protected in a way that no other bank in America could boast.

"I ought to get a patent on it," he chuckled grimly. "Three dollars and seventy-five cents was all it cost, and the idea is worth hundreds!"

As the week wore away, Franklin found it increasingly difficult to go ahead with his conspiracy. The old town had taken hold of him. When Saturday forenoon arrived it would not have taken much to complete his reformation. But the abnormally developed evil genius within him was still in preponderance, and he decided to make the attack that same afternoon and have it done with before he wilted entirely.

He had his getaway planned perfectly. As soon as he had secured the cash, he

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would raise the rear window in the directors' room and drop to the ground. He would speed through the alley to Cross Street, where the engine would be running in the roadster he had purchased. He would drive to the old barn at the end of Hill Street and wait there until evening During that time he would shave off his beard, get into a different set of work clothes and make a disfiguring mutilation to his left-side upper lip with a bit of sticking plaster, changing his appearance and features entirely.

When darkness fell he would open the doors of the old barn and drive out a truck—a truck piled high with boxes and furniture and with a lantern burning at the tailboard. No one would ever hail and detain the driver of a moving van making a cross-country run with a harmless-looking load of household goods at night when the traffic was light. Thousands of such loads plied the Vermont roads during the season. He would head into New Hampshire and down through Nashua to Lowell and Boston. At Boston he would desert the load and catch the steamer for South America. The little tramp-boat would be far out at sea before they trailed him, if they ever did.

Immediately after dinner he drove out to the Hill Street buildings to make certain everything was ready for the flight. The truck engine worked perfectly, there was ample gasoline. His clothes and shaving materials were all at hand. And he had a dozen routes planned to throw pursuers off his track, in case any one saw him drop out of the bank window.

He waited at the place until ten minutes to three, for the banks in Foxboro do not close at noon on Saturdays as in the cities. He had made the trip to the bank dozens of times to gage the distance to the fraction of a moment. Then he went to the roadster, cranked it, climbed in and drove away.

BESIDE him in the car was a twelve-foot step-ladder that protruded over the back end of the machine. On the car floor was one of his new meters, a huge circular affair with a stout wooden backboard, the inside surface covered over the peculiar green metal and the intricate mechanism, harmless enough in its appearance, protected by a great glass globe. It was twice the size of the ordinary electric meter. A bag of green flannel encased the whole affair.

Bryant arrived at the bank on schedule at three minutes to three. The lobby was full of patrons, mostly business men getting cash for their weekly pay-rolls. But they were thinning out. He must get inside before old David locked the door and drew the curtains to prevent the entrance of others, who would prolong the banking hours after the regular closing time.

As he alighted from the machine and lifted out the heavy apparatus, he knew perfectly that the two new clerks which had lately been added to the banking force were not at all raw country boys taken in to learn the business as announced the previous week in the *Times*. They were city detectives, installed in the place for protection. But bankers or detectives, they cut no figure. His plan was perfect; they would be as powerless as the rest.

He entered the bank just as David was starting to lock the doors. He set the big

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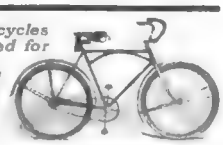

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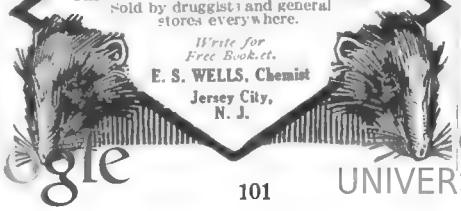

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Dear Sir: Will you send me full particulars about your plan to pay for my Christmas expenses?

Name .....

Street .....

City ..... *State* .....

meter down and wiped his forehead. Then he beckoned to Arthur.

The cashier came out into the lobby. But whether from force of habit or deliberate purpose, he carefully pulled the small partition door shut behind him and heard the spring lock snap securely. Bryant wanted to curse at his thoroughness. It was like him, damn him!

"Well, Mr. Tarring," he said, "after a week's work I've at last persuaded the local manager of the Twin States Gas & Electric Company to allow me to install a few sample meters around town with the idea of testing them out and equipping Foxboro with the new local product first, if they prove successful. Your bank represents an average consumer of electricity. To-morrow is the first of the new month and I want to replace your present meter with this one, installed by myself, to get your month's consumption accurately and compare results with the meter you're now using."

"But we're just closing up!" protested Arthur.

"What of that? You're going to be around the place for a couple of hours yet, aren't you? It won't take me long to make the transposition. Seems to me that's the least you can do for the new local company—give them this chance at a demonstration and aid the business in finding its market."

"ALL right," replied the cashier good-naturedly. They were standing close by the middle-shelf desk used for the indorsement of checks and making out of deposit slips by the bank's patrons. Instinctively Arthur glanced up at the company's smaller meter high over their heads close to the ceiling. "How you going to reach it?" he asked.

"I've got my ladder and kit of tools out in the car. Tell Mr. Babcock to admit me when I tap on the glass of the front door."

Arthur assented. Franklin left the new meter lying on the floor close to the wall and went out. He returned with the ladder.

"I find I've forgotten my screw-driver," he announced inside the bank a moment later. "I'll hurry up-street to the hardware and buy a new one."

He returned to the roadster again. But he did not stop at the hardware store three blocks up Main Street when he arrived before it. He turned abruptly down Maple Street, through Pearl and came back on to Cross Street. He drove up Cross Street, until he was opposite the alley which led in back of the bank. There he stopped the machine, but not the engine. Leaving the latter somewhat throttled down but running smoothly, he lifted the tin top that covered the back, found a screw-driver among the car's tools and started up Cross to Main Street again.

There he tapped once more on the glass of the door and was admitted. His keen eye did not miss the fact that as old David had Miss Willard open the partition door and went back to his work behind the plate glass, he left the Yale key in the lock. Also that Arthur arose when David came behind, and made certain the partition lock had sprung. Fear tore through him for the instant, that perhaps after all Arthur suspected him; a moment later he decided it was just Arthur's force of habit.

It took several minutes for Franklin to

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get his coat off, his sleeves rolled up and his ladder in position. Then he climbed to the top of the ladder, unscrewed the old meter after he had unfastened the connecting wires, and brought it down carefully to the floor.

From his desk, over the top of the intervening glass-and-walnut partition, Arthur watched the transposition with interest. Franklin knew he was being watched and prolonged the business of cutting away the old insulation from the wires, being careful not to bring them together in short circuit. Then he descended again.

He knelt on the floor and took the new meter from its green cloth bag. Carefully he poised it between his knees, for the thing was heavy.

He considered. He had to get that partition door unlocked somehow, else how was he to get behind, where he could later help himself to the currency? A happy thought came to him. He decided to try Arthur out again.

"CAN one of you come and steady this ladder?" he called. "This meter weighs forty pounds."

Arthur responded. But the criminal was disappointed quickly. Again the methodical "Third-Speed" cashier saw to it that the partition door was snapped behind him. Though Franklin could not know it, the act was merely a precaution in which the cashier had carefully schooled himself and not because there was the least suspicion of the new manufacturer in his mind. Again Franklin could have cursed, only the curse would have given him away. The spring lock could be unfastened from behind the glass by turning the small brass knob. But from the outer side it required a key.

"Hang on to it steady, now," he admonished. "These things cost fifty dollars apiece and make accidents expensive!"

Arthur gripped the ladder. Franklin gathered himself for the big effort. With a lunge he swung the meter into the curve of his arm and started upward.

An exact account of just what happened has not yet been given out. There were six people in the bank, including the cashier, and all have given six different stories. They all agree in this, however, that whether the big apparatus slipped from Bryant's grasp or whether the first screw he drove in failed to hold, *the meter came down!* It came down with an awful crash. And the moment it struck the floor and the glass shivered into a thousand pieces, the whole banking-room was immediately permeated with a gagging nauseous odor.

Then hell broke loose!

Arthur Tarring, standing directly over the shattered globe, uttered a wild inarticulate cry and caught at his throat. He went down on his knees, then writhed on the floor.

Miss Willard started up at the crash and tried to reach the counter. She stumbled over a chair because she could not see her way. Along with the terrible suffocation came pain in her eyes. They were suddenly fused with tears—blinding, blistering tears! She fell across a chair, clawing at her lace collar and tearing it from her wrinkled throat.

Old Babcock contorted crazily on his high stool and fell off with a sickening thud. Both detectives were instantly rendered helpless. They groped their way about like lost souls and one of them hit his head against the corner of the vault and went unconscious. Little Miss Williams, the new assistant clerk and stenographer, wilted across her typewriter.

And from the top of the ladder a fiend from Hades looked down upon the sudden pandemonium. Quigley Franklin had turned into a fiend from hell because his face had disappeared. In its place was a contraption that made him a figure out of a nightmare—great goggle eyes and a long microbe-shaped nose that disappeared into his shirt-front. At the instant he had let go the meter he had held his breath long enough to whip out the gas-mask and get it into place. When he turned, the place was in his power!

The place was in his power!

A wave of exultant emotion surged through him.

They were helpless, all of them. They would stay helpless until doors or windows were opened and the vile, devastating gas was replaced with pure clean air. That would not be until some one from the outside rescued them. But he had to make sure they were powerless to summon that aid.

Down from the ladder, therefore, the robber came—as quickly as the limited vision of the mask would permit.

The first thing he did was to step over Arthur's writhing body and reach the door. There he tore the Yale key from the lock; Arthur might grope his way to the doors, turn the key, summon fatal help. He pocketed the key and ran back to the cashier.

From his pocket he pulled several short pieces of rope. He bent over the friend of his boyhood and worked swiftly. In a moment he had bound the man's feet. Three minutes more and he had the hands securely tied. Arthur was helpless.

Swiftly then the criminal went through Arthur's pockets. But he did not find what he expected to find; the key to the spring lock on the partition door.

Again and again he went through the pockets. He brought out money, letters, a jack-knife, pair of scissors. But there was no key that fitted the lock. And precious time was being lost. One of the detectives was contorting and groaning on the floor. Moreover, he had his revolver out. Franklin realized he had to get over that partition at once. The man was about to shoot into the ceiling to summon aid.

FRANKLIN clutched for the green cloth bag in which he expected to bear away his loot. After all, the door was not so important. He could easily scale the partition and drop down over the other side.

So he cast his eye along the partition for the most convenient place to go over, considering the impediment of the mask which made both seeing and breathing difficult. The easiest place was the cashier's window marked "Deposits." He could put a knee on the protruding shelf, grasp the grill work and pull himself up. From there he could straddle the partition and drop down among all the helpless wealth awaiting pillage.

Suiting the action to the thought, he leaped for the window. He gripped the grill work. He put a knee on the counter and grasped for the top molding of the

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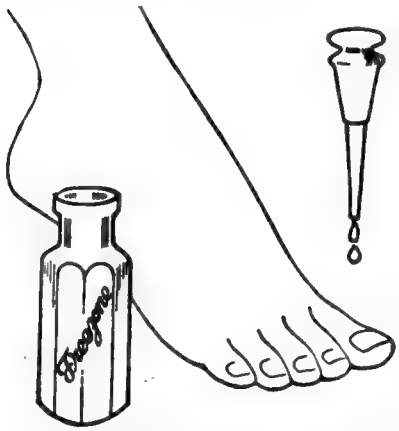

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partition. And the instant he had done so, something happened to Quigley F. Franklin, alias E. K. Markhim.

Through his whole body tore a frightful, searing, blasting zoom of paralyzing power that jerked him rigid like a man of wood.

Sixteen hundred damnable volts of high-current electricity found connection through his body—from the sheet-iron top of the wicket shelf where he knelt, to the livid copper wire strung along the top of the partition out of sight, which he had gripped with his hands!

IV

THE non-deadly but effective tear gas hung in the dead still air of the room like sickly yellow steam. Gradually it rose upward.

His eyes bulbous with water, his throat afire, Arthur finally worked his hands loose from the bonds. He kept close to the floor. Deathly ill, he crawled to the front doors. He groped for the lock. The key was gone.

He shook the knob with all the strength in him but it did not respond.

He tried to call out to his employees but could not make sensible words.

At length he managed to reach the partition door. But that also was fastened.

He could not climb over the top of the partition, for he remembered well enough, despite his temporary mental chaos, the deadly wire he had strung there, judging accurately enough that if the prospective thief could not get the narrow door open, he would climb over the partition, using the most available method—the help that the shelf under one of the wickets would give him.

He could not break the heavy plate glass of the partition even if he had been so minded. He had nothing with which to break it. He was trapped there in the lobby; his hands were cut and bleeding where his palms had clawed over the broken pieces of glass.

And so, groping about there with his head splitting, the banker came upon Franklin's prostrate body.

Stuck in the belt was the screw-driver with which the bogus manufacturer had removed the bona-fide meter. All unintentionally his hand closed upon it as he fumbled over Franklin's burned and senseless form.

He pulled himself to his feet, brushing his arm across his face frantically to get the water out of his eyes. Then he clawed hysterically at the partition until he reached the teller's window. His fingers found the edge of the wicket. He inserted the screw-driver in one side. With a twist and a grind it snapped open, the broken lock-piece falling to the counter behind.

Despite his bulk Arthur managed to squeeze through. He fell in a heap on the other side. Picking himself up, he collided with the Willard woman, tumbled over a chair, knocked over the adding machine, reached the door to the directors' room, felt through and found the rear window. Shoving it up, he collapsed across the sill, But into his nostrils plunged sweet, pure, reviving air!

As his eyes and throat cleared, despite his splitting head, his strength came back. All three windows of the directors' room he threw wide open.

Loading his lungs with the life-giving air, he finally turned back into the bank. One by one he helped the choking, blinded, exhausted people into the room. Each time he revived himself with a fresh supply of air in his lungs before going back. The last time he turned the knob on the rear side of the narrow partition door and got to the front. There he pulled down the big transom. Immediately there was a great swirl in the sickly yellow atmosphere. It whirlpooled around and began to eddy outward.

"Wait!" he cried hoarsely, commanding his voice at last. "Don't one of you make a move to summon anybody! I want to handle this business myself. We've been diabolically gassed, but not an inkling of it must get out. I've got a good reason!"

At half-past three Doctor Ramadge over on Elm Street received a phone call.

"Come over to the First National Bank at once, Doctor," directed Arthur Tarring's steady voice. "Mr. Markhim, the new manufacturer, came in here to do some electrical work and has been badly shocked."

Doctor Ramadge made the distance in epochal time.

Arthur met him at the door. He led the way to the back room of the bank.

"What's the peculiar odor?" the doctor demanded. "It makes my head reel."

"We've smelled it too," returned Arthur. "It's made us all pretty sick. I understand that the new meter he dropped when the shock happened contained some kind of chemicals.

"You see, Markhim claimed that his new invention did away with those costly transformers out on the poles. It transformed the current as it went through the meter as well as measured it."

The doctor kneeled beside the inert figure of the manufacturer. The gas-mask had been removed and hidden. There was nothing in the banking quarters excepting the step-ladder and broken meter out in front to indicate anything that had happened.

"This man has been badly burned. Look at his hands!" claimed Ramadge. "No ordinary lighting current could do this."

"AN EXTRA heavy load must have come through the wires as he was working over them," declared Arthur evenly. The two detectives looked at the banker sullenly. But they were under orders. They said nothing.

"This man should be removed to the hospital," declared the physician.

"Suppose," said Arthur, "you attend to him in my house."

At ten minutes past six that evening the trained nurse announced that Franklin was calling for the banker. Arthur went upstairs. He let himself into the chamber where lay a white-faced man with hands wrapped in heavy bandages.

They looked at each other a moment without speaking. Finally Franklin broke the silence.

"Well," he croaked, "why did you do it?"

"Do what?"

"Bring me here? Cover this thing up? The doctor was for giving me a shot when I blurted out about what I'd tried to do. He thought I was out of my head. I saw he didn't know anything about it."

"Yes, that's true," confessed Arthur.

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"He doesn't know anything about it. Seeing no harm has resulted excepting a mighty uncomfortable quarter-hour for us. I pledged them to say nothing about it. I persuaded them that some people might not believe our version of the story. They might think we *had* been robbed and start a run on us. We have to be very careful about stories getting around having to do with unusual things happening to banks, you know."

"Well, you've got me all right. When do you send me up?"

"Quigley, I've made up my mind not to send you up!"

"*What!*"

"I've made up my mind not to send you up. I've thought a great deal about your case since Madeleine died. The trouble between us was due solely to a difference in temperaments and philosophies. I was built to plod, you were built to plunge. Perhaps I am no more to be commended than you are to be censured. Anyhow, I'm not going to pass judgment. We both loved Madeleine. But you loved her enough to commit a crime to save her life. It resulted in losing her and then in twenty years of exile for you. I've decided that's punishment enough."

"My God! I——"

"It was a questionable sort of heroism. Nevertheless, that's what it was. I'm afraid I'd been too yellow to have dared it. But we'll let that all pass, like the nightmare it is. You've come back. You've been accepted here as a stranger. The community respects you as a bona-fide manufacturer. Suppose you let it keep on thinking so, Quig. There are a hundred products you can make in the factory you've leased beside bogus electric meters loaded with tear gas with which to rob banks. Go ahead and live up to your new rôle. Ignore the past. Start fresh, and I'll help you. I refused you a loan once because it was poor business. I'd do it again under similar circumstances. But if you make good here in some new venture that is *sound* and you want accommodation, I promise you that nothing that has occurred in the past shall prejudice me. You may believe that I harmed you once. You can't claim that I'm repeating it now. I've given you a new lease to be a man and come through clean. Will you meet me half-way, Quig, or must I go the whole distance?"

THE bank looter looked up into Arthur's kindly furrowed face. And his own welled with great terrible man-tears.

"You win, Art," he cried thickly. "I'll come—the whole distance!" They clasped hands. Arthur sat down and pulled out two cigars. He handed Quigley one. He cut off the tip of the other for himself. Then he laughed.

"You certainly did give an old friend a tight squeeze for a moment, however," he observed. "When you yanked that key out of the locked front door you automatically closed both exits. You see, the same key unlocks the door through the partition. I had twin locks put on those doors several years ago to save the trouble of monkeying with two keys. Simply a part of my general policy for analyzing the importance of detail, you know."

He blew a smoke ring meditatively and then sent a second one through the first.

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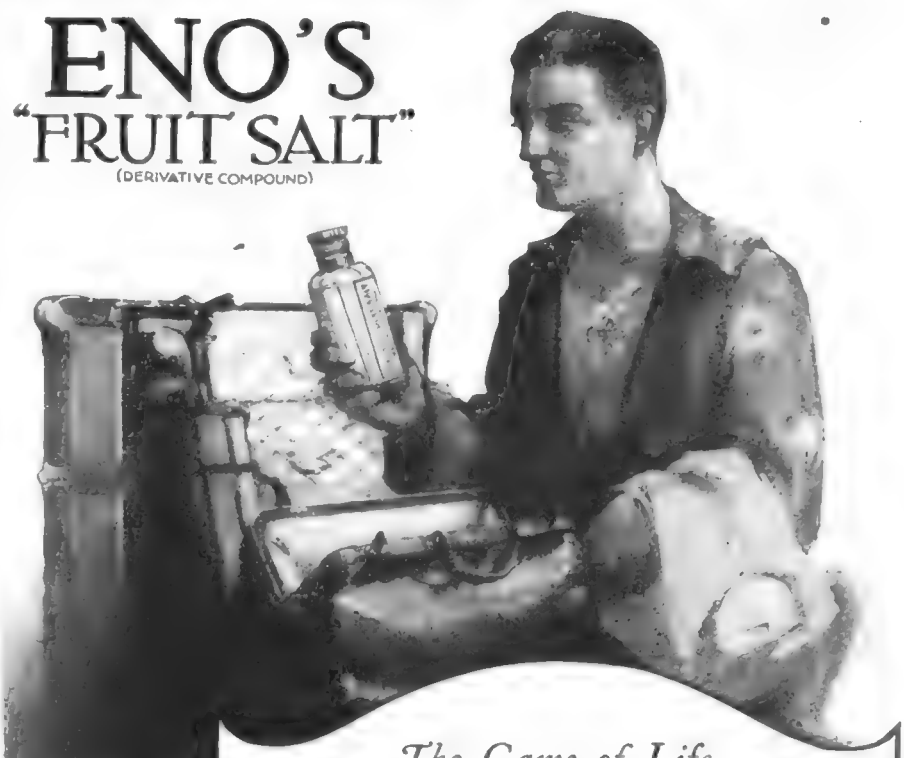

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I'LL SHOW YOU THE TOWN

(*Continued from page 50*)

as if her last friend were casting her out on the street because she was in the way.

So I consoled her, and while I was consoling her I thought of a way out.

"My dear child," I told her, "there is nothing in the world I'd like better than to have you at this party. The others are most of them people you'd like to know, now that you've come here to live; and you'd help it out, anyway. You look well around the house. But we can't afford it. You can't afford it for the sake of your reputation; and I can't afford it because Wyndham College needs the money. Remember how we used to pull together for the old place, Lucile? Well, if you've any college spirit left, now is the time to show it.

"I'm going to send you out for an automobile ride. You pack up your things and get them out of sight—and put some extraneous clothes on; and I'll get you a nice big car that you can ride around in till, say, about half-past six. Then you come back; we'll go to dinner somewhere and talk things over; and you can go to a hotel if your ankle is well enough, and to a hospital if it isn't."

"I HATE to miss the party," she sighed. "But— Oh, well! All right."

It was easier to promise than to do, for I had to carry her into the bedroom. But she was game, and though it must have been a painful task to pack her clothes and dress, she was ready almost as soon as I'd finished telephoning to the garage. Lucile had always had her occasional moments of energy, if you could only get her started.

"You're an angel," I told her. "We'll slide these suitcases under the bed, and get them this evening. There! Now when the car comes——"

"You'll have to carry me down-stairs and put me in," she reminded me. "I can't step on my foot yet. Lucky I had these pumps; they're as big as scows. Now, let's see. The rest of the things from the bakery are on the lower shelf of the kitchenette, and the sugar is in the silver bowl. Don't slice the lemons with the little knife; it's all covered with rust, and the long pearl-handled one will do as well. I put the cream in the upper part of the ice-box, and—I guess that's all. And I hope you'll have a nice party."

"And the car is here," I observed, looking out of the window. "Let's get started."

I picked her up and carried her out into the hallway. She wrapped one arm around my neck and pushed the elevator bell with the other hand, and presently we heard it droning on its upward course.

"Talk about scandal!" she laughed. "Your hall-boys don't know anything about my ankle. What will they think when they see me in your arms?"

"They never think," I assured her out of the fulness of experience. "And as for their suspicions——"

I got no further. For the car rose up in front of us, the door swung back—and here were Agnes and Emerine Spivey.

What Agnes thought I don't know, but the Spivey woman glowed with the salacious joy that exalts the righteous when they find out that the wicked are really as wicked as they had hoped. I jumped

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frantically to get in the first word, but it was a rather uninspired word.

"I told you five," I said weakly. "You're early."

"So I see," said Miss Spivey gleefully. "Maybe we'd better come back at five, Mrs. Clevenger."

"Oh, no, no!" I urged. "Don't—don't go away, now that you're here. Just walk in. As soon as I take this—this sick lady down to her car——"

"It happens to be my car," said Agnes. "I bought it from Mr. Bonner this morning. I think we'd better resume our drive, Miss Spivey."

"But you'll come back for the party?" I begged wildly.

"You seem to be having a number of parties," Agnes commented. "No doubt we could drop in almost any time and find some kind of a party. Down!"

And they went down, leaving Lucile and me clinging helplessly to each other like shipwrecked castaways.

"Well!" she sighed at last. "Caught again! We do have the darnedest luck. What are we going to do now?"

"We're going to go back into my apartment and shut the door, before anybody else sees us," I said; and we did.

"Do you suppose she'll come back?" Lucile asked.

"Not if the Spivey woman can prevent it," I predicted. "But maybe— I have at times been able to put Agnes in a good humor; and she owes me something, if she'll stop only to think about it. Don't worry Lucile. Give me a chance to talk to her, and maybe I can get this straightened out."

"Oh, I hope you can! Any way, now that she's seen us at—at our worst, we might as well brazen it out. I'll show that woman, if she ever comes back. I'm going to help you, Alec. I've done you enough harm. No, don't spare my feelings; it's all my fault. But now— You see, this woman has caught us in a compromising position. What she's going to think she's thought already; the damage has been done. If she comes back, she'll find me pouring tea. Tell the hall-boy to send our car back to the garage, if the miserable old thing ever gets here."

"BUT what are you going to say to Agnes?"

"Well, somebody will have to say something to her; and I can lie better than you can. I always could. And if I can't do some artistic lying for Wyndham College, when I've yelled my throat out for her at football games, and nearly got drowned for her playing water polo against the Claiborne coeds—remember that game, Alec?—why, I can't lie at all. When your friend Agnes comes back here, she'll run into the most convincing bundle of falsehoods she ever heard. We'll get that dormitory yet."

There was reason in this. Agnes had seen too much or not enough; it would certainly look more respectable to pretend that it was all a hasty misunderstanding than to try to smuggle Lucile out of the way. So I called off the automobile order, and Lucile and I were engaged in an ostentatiously innocuous game of double Canfield when the door-bell rang at a quarter to five.

But it wasn't Agnes. It was Wyman clad in all the clothes he thought would

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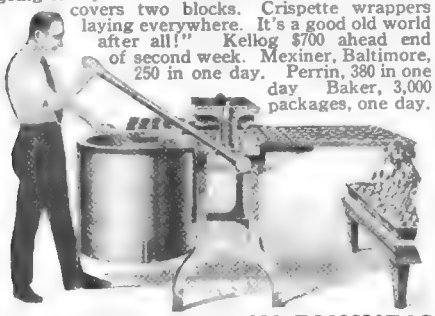

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"Only one ahead of you. Mrs. Pemberton——"

I got no further. Lucile had risen up on one foot, and she and Wyman were staring at each other, incredulous—

"You!" they cried in unison. She took a step forward, forgetting the ankle, and collapsed in a heap with a little scream. Wyman woke out of his stupor, picked her up and helped her to the couch.

"How the devil did you get here?" he demanded. "And what are you doing?"

Well, of course I'd thought of the possibility, when Wyman and Lucile had told me their stories of ill-starred love, that it might have been the same affair from different angles; my imagination liked to work that way. But precisely because it was so obvious, because I was so good at imagining things for my friends, conjecturing buried past connections and possible future meetings, and a host of absurd complications that would bring together people I liked and throw a dash of romance into their prosaic lives, I'd dismissed it as a ridiculous fancy. But it was true; and he'd found her in my rooms; and he hadn't kissed her; he was asking her what she was doing here—

"For God's sake," I implored him, "reserve your judgment till I tell you about it. I know Lucile's presence here looks suspicious, but we can explain everything——"

"Oh, you don't have to explain anything. I have every confidence in you, Alec—and in Lucile, of course. What I want to know is why she's in New York."

"I have left my husband."

"Yes, I supposed you'd done that. But, my dear girl, what is the idea?"

"I must live my own life," said Lucile. "I can not feel that it is right for me to go on living with a man who is repugnant to my higher self. Aren't you glad, Alan?"

"Why, of course I'm glad," he declared; and at last they kissed. Their greeting wasn't as passionate as I'd have expected; but of course I was there—an intruder, an outsider. No doubt they were exercising restraint over their tempestuous natures.

"BUT what are you going to do?" he asked as they drew apart.

"I am determined to become economically independent."

"Oh, I see. Yes. Quite right. Excellent. Here in New York?"

"Here in New York. You and Alec will stand by me, won't you?"

"Of course we'll stand by you. Won't we, Alec?"

"Of course we'll stand by her," I declared loyally. Though I didn't see quite what my part was to be in the rest of the drama. Now that Lucile had found her Bayard, I supposed it was my cue to efface myself. But of course if they needed me—

"Well, what are you going to do?" Wyman asked her. "Have you any money? And what did you say to Frank? And what did he say to you?"

"Oh, it's a long story, Alan. I've got so much to tell you. Oh! We'll have a nice long talk, won't we? Just like old times. I can hardly wait."

"Alan can take you to dinner to-night, in my place," I suggested. "I'll be busy,

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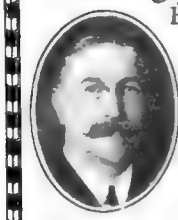

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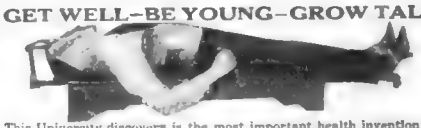

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anyway; I'll have to get down-down before long, and square things with Mrs. Clevenger. It begins to look as if she isn't coming back."

Then we had to tell Wyman what had happened, and it was a dreary recital; for time was continuing to pass, and everybody was continuing not to come to the party.

I saw that they both felt a certain constraint; they had so many things to say to each other that ought not to wait on the banalities of tea-table chatter.

"Look here," I suggested. "My party's gone to pieces; that's plain enough. It's half-past five; Agnes Clevenger would never be half an hour late unless she had to dress up in some clothes she wasn't used to. She isn't coming. And I don't think my other guests will turn up——"

"Why not?" Lucile asked.

I thought I knew why not. Mrs. Whitlow had finally set her foot down on Hazel's association with me, after that clandestine drive up the river; the word had gone forth that I was no more to be allowed to see her.

I might have something to say about that eventually, but at any rate Hazel and Sarah wouldn't be here this afternoon.

However, obviously I couldn't tell Lucile all this.

"It's too late now," I said. "Nobody's coming. I'll telephone for a car, and you and Wyman can take a drive and talk things over. Then he can send you to a hotel, and I'll meet him—where shall we say? Harvard Club at ten? And we'll see what can be done. How about that?"

"But what becomes of your party?"

"NEVER mind my party," I said gloomily. "In the idiom of the vulgar, it has gone kerflooie."

She protested that somebody might still appear, so for the next ten minutes we made a cheerless pretense of eating sandwiches and drinking tea. Then they agreed that they might as well go; and I admit that I felt a sensation of profound thankfulness when at last Wyman and Lucile, and Lucile's suitcases and Lucile's dogs, were stowed away in a big car and disappeared around the corner.

I wanted to sit down and rest, but there was no time for that. Action must be taken, and at once, if I wanted to prevent the collapse of Wyndham College's campaign for an endowment fund. It was nearly six; I'd have to put my silver tea-set and the best cups back in the kitchenette, send the rest of the food down the dumb-waiter to the janitor's family, and then go out and hunt Agnes. I might be able to explain—after all, the truth was harmless enough, if I could get her to believe it; and if I could not explain I might be able to win her over somehow; I had done more difficult things than that with Agnes when I put my mind on her.

But just as I laid hands on the tea-things the doorbell clattered. I'd left the door ajar, and I supposed it was the telephone girl with the day's bundle of checks for my signature.

"Come in!" I shouted.

The door opened and closed. I looked up at Hazel—Hazel, alone and unchaperoned, and as refreshing as a breath of cool wind.

"Hello!" she said cheerfully. "Am I too late for the party?"

Chapter Fourteen

I Hold the Sack

"YOU'RE never too late for any party of mine," I told her. "Cream or lemon?"

She looked at the empty rooms, the seven tea cups—

"Why, where is the party?"

"You are it. The bottom has dropped out of the rest of it.

"Why, didn't they come?"

"Oh, yes. They came, all of them; but they didn't stay."

"I know I oughtn't to stay," said Hazel, "if there's nobody here but you and me. But I do want to hear about it, and I'm absolutely famished. I had an awful time getting rid of Sarah—finally left her looking at waists at Reinach's, while I sneaked around a corner of the counter and slipped out the side door. I'm dreadfully late, I know, but I didn't dare tell her. Lemon, please. Three lumps. Oh, what heavenly sandwiches!"

She had eaten two or three of them, and I had discovered that I was really hungry before she had time to ask:

"But where are all the rest of them? Didn't you say Mrs. Clevenger was coming? And your—your guest? Has she gone?"

"She's gone."

"For good?"

"Yes, thank God. Why?"

"Oh, I just wondered. I noticed that yellow silk stocking twisted in your bookrack—"

"Good Lord, did I overlook that?"

Hazel looked at me and my well housekept apartment for a moment, then laughed.

"You've been getting into trouble again, haven't you? Tell me about it."

I told her about it—told her everything—Agnes and Lucile and Wyman and all. It was a relief to tell somebody, and I felt that she would understand. When I finished she smiled slowly.

"Then Mrs. Clevenger is done with you?"

"Not yet," I vowed. "I'm going to see her to-night, and try to explain."

Hazel whistled.

"She'll never believe you. I believe you, but I think I know a little more than she does."

"She's learned a good deal," I sighed, wishing that I had never educated her.

"Yes," Hazel agreed, "she's learned just enough to make her think she knows it all. And this affair of yours is a little unusual—a little exotic—well, I don't know just what to call it, but I'll bet you a box of cigars against a dozen roses that it won't get over. You poor thing, Mrs. Torrey ought to put somebody in charge of you, instead of making you look after other people. Honestly, Alec— Well, she's gone now, of course."

"Agnes?"

"No, the other one. Lucile. And she isn't coming back. That helps. Does she still owe you money?"

"Yes, but that's nothing. We've known each other so long; lots of people owe me money—"

"Of course it's nothing," said Hazel. "You know it's nothing, and I know it's nothing. But how about a jury?"

"A jury?"

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"Well, she has a husband, you know. Suppose he'd followed her and found her here. And even if you can cover that up for all time, she still owes you money. Did it ever occur to you, Alec, that a young man who lends a lady money to live on apart from her husband might lay himself open to an alienation suit, or something like that? Of course it didn't; it wouldn't, to you. And you're so obliging that it wouldn't have made any difference, anyway. All you thought about was a pretty girl in trouble who needed a little money. It was all nice and kind, and helpful and romantic; nothing wrong about it. But everything sounds wicked when you have to tell it to a jury."

"I don't see what else I could have done," I protested. "Anyway, her husband didn't come after her. There's that much to be thankful for."

"And if he comes now I suppose—Well, Mr. Wyman's looking after her now, isn't he?"

"YES, Mr. Wyman is looking after her. But I don't know— I can't help thinking——"

"That's the only thing the matter with you," said Hazel. "You can't help thinking. You think too much; it isn't good for you. Stop thinking and talk to me."

It was a relief to be treated kindly by somebody after that epidemic of trouble; an hour with Hazel had a wonderful effect on my nerves. When she finally decided she'd have to go I took her to the Plaza and then went straight to the Ritz. I was going to have it out with Agnes—to stake everything on the word of a hitherto respectable person, a Deupree, the first man who had ever told her she was beautiful. But when I sent up my name Agnes notified the desk that she couldn't see me.

I went into a telephone booth and called her room.

"You must see me," I told her. "Circumstances have given you a false impression which I must correct for your sake, and the sake of an innocent woman, as well as my own."

"I seem to have been entertaining a wrong impression of you for some years, Doctor Deupree."

"I can explain everything."

"You've told me that before; and when I think over the stories you've told me I don't believe that you could explain anything."

And she hung up.

I couldn't let her go. It was only twenty minutes past seven, and Agnes must eat. She might have dinner in her room, but I'd take the chance and wait for her in the lobby.

And in perhaps a quarter of an hour she stepped out of the elevator—the same elevator from which she had emerged at the beginning of our riotous night last week. And she wore the same evening gown of blue and silver that had dazzled me that night. But now there was no embarrassed expectancy about her, no anticipation of the joy of viewing sinful revels with a properly disapproving eye. Agnes had seen enough sin.

I headed her off as she started toward the dining-room.

"Don't make a scene!" she cried. "Don't make a scene!"

"There will be no scene," I promised, "unless you make it. I merely want you to come over here in a corner of the lounge, and sit down, and listen to me for a few minutes. If you do that, there will be no scene. If you don't want to do that, you can call the porter and have him try to throw me out. I think I can whip him. Eventually, of course, you can get a policeman; and I'll spend the night in a station house and lose my job. But I'd rather do that than miss this chance."

Firmness seemed to work better with Agnes than with Hazel. She said, "Oh, very well," and meekly followed me to a little seat in a secluded corner of the lounge, where nobody was near us but a waiter who went away disgusted when he found we had no order to give.

"This is all based on a misunderstanding," I began.

"It is," she said severely. "My misunderstanding of your whole character. Now I understand you only too well. My worst suspicions—suspicions that I strove to stifle, for your sainted father's sake—have all been justified."

"What suspicions did you ever have about me?"

"The way you talked to me that day we came up from Asbury Park. About my personal appearance. You said things that nobody had ever said before."

"I said you were beautiful, didn't I?"

"Well, that was true, of course," Agnes admitted. "But the remarks you made about—about clothing, and such matters—no virtuous young man could have known as much as you did about—about what was needed."

"But you took my advice!"

"I had long felt that it might be more advisable for me to devote more attention to personal adornment. And your tone—well, it was not that to which I had been accustomed. I remembered that you had lived for several years in New York; I feared, even then, that you had become depraved by the corrupted standards of the city. And how true that was! As soon as I started to go about with you, you betrayed a very suspicious familiarity with places of wicked resort. Cafés, and such places. Didn't you?"

"I wanted to show you the town," I apologized.

"WELL, you did. And it was just as bad as I expected."

"Yes," I said fiercely, "it was just as bad as you expected. If I'd showed you the respectable, quiet places where people live and work you'd have been bored to death; you'd have said it was just like home. You wanted to see New York, but you're like everybody else—you wanted to see the idea of New York that you'd brought along from home with you. And I showed you the places that are kept open so that tourists from the rest of the country won't be disappointed. New York would like to be moral, but the rest of you won't let it; so we maintain the cafés to keep you from feeling that your vacations have been spoiled. And you went with me——"

"Yes; out of the mistaken kindness of my heart, I went with you. I said to myself, this young man is slipping from the ways of the fathers; he is no longer true to his higher self. You seemed to like it, you know; you—you seemed to know all the head waiters, and everything. And I thought to myself that it was dreadful that a Deupree should be going to places like

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this; but that if he had to lead that kind of a life, it would be better for him to do so in the company of a good, pure woman who would exercise an uplifting influence over him. For your sake I went to places such as I'd never think of going to——"

"But you liked them."

"Liked them! Why, I thought they were awful. But I felt that as long as you would go to such a place, it was better for you to be there with me than by yourself, or with one of those—those terrible creatures——"

"I don't associate with terrible creatures."

"Well, I don't know what you call terrible in New York; but— Who was that girl who answered the telephone when I called your apartment on Sunday? Who was the girl you brought up to Maplecrest?"

"Leave her out of this."

"There seem to be enough of them left in this, even with one or two left out. Poor thing, she was young, too. And who was this girl you were embracing this afternoon——"

"She was an old friend," I said. "A very old and dear friend——"

"The acquaintance seemed to have progressed beyond the initial stages."

"Listen;" I said. "That girl regards me as a brother. She came to town on Sunday, with no money and nowhere to go, and I gave her my apartment——"

"No wonder you didn't come back to the conference."

"I missed my train and stayed with a friend; I can prove it. And to-day she was just leaving——"

"Well, I should hope so, when you'd invited me to tea; but I don't see why you had to—to flaunt your fond farewells in the face of anybody who happened to come along."

"She'd sprained her ankle, and I had to carry her. Don't you——"

"Pray do not continue. You are not skilled in falsehood."

"Well," I groaned, "I am certainly not skilled in getting anybody to believe the truth."

"Practise makes perfect," said Agnes. "But enough of this. Doctor Deupree, I could pardon your fault, perhaps, if you would confess it. I can see that you are what is called a devil among women; but I remember your sainted father's saying to me that he was afraid that Kentucky blood would come out. But the thing I can not pardon is your trying to palm off on me this ridiculous tissue of falsehoods about sprained ankles, and old friends. I am no inexperienced schoolgirl, to be gulled with such a story; I am a woman of the world!"

"Don't make a scene," I begged her.

"I'm not making a scene," said Agnes. "This isn't a scene, and even if it were whose fault is it? Why—I suppose nothing but my own strength of character has saved me from being numbered among your victims. You thought because I was innocent and—and from Indianapolis, it would be easy. You thought you had to deal with a simple, inexperienced girl. You took me to that play, hoping that its flippant impropriety would undermine the foundations of my character. You took me to this café to familiarize me with scenes of luxury and wickedness. You put the wine glass to my lips——"

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"I didn't!"

"It was probably drugged," she continued. "Oh, I have read about New York and the way young girls are lured to destruction. Well, your plot failed; you turn to easier amusement, and then you come to me with this girl's kisses hot on your lips and beg me to take you back."

"I never begged you to take me, back or anywhere else," I cried. "I came here to-night because you're an old friend of the family, and I wanted to tell you the truth and save the family reputation. And I can't get it over because I haven't brains enough to tell a lie. That family reputation has haunted me all my life—spotlessly white, not a blot on the scutcheon. Every time I've showed a spark of life they've told me I was putting a black mark on the family record. I wish I'd never heard of the family record. I wish my name had been Smith, and my ancestors had been among the socially inefficient. And now I'm done!"

"Not yet," said Agnes. "I can not let you go without one last appeal. Be fair to—to the unfortunate companion of your folly. I have not the narrow attitude of many good women toward such unfortunate creatures. Whatever may have been her past, she is more sinned against than sinning, and it is always the woman who pays. But deep down in the soul of every woman, no matter how abandoned, there lurks some spark of hope. Keep that spark alight, Doctor Deupree! You have dragged this poor creature down; now lift her up again. Perhaps with your feet treading the upward pathway side by side; with perhaps a—a child's clinging hands to draw you together, you may yet find happiness. Marry her!"

"I can't," I said. "She's married."

"In that case," said Agnes, "I have no more to say to you."

"Don't go yet," I implored. "You're mistaken. If you and Miss Spivey——"

"DO NOT presume to criticize Miss Spivey," said Agnes. "She is a wise and noble woman. Her judgment of this matter agrees with mine. You may appreciate my confidence in her when I tell you that to-morrow morning's papers will announce a gift of half a million dollars, from me, to the Home for the Orphans of Victims of the Tobacco Habit."

And I had some two hours to reflect upon this total and irrevocable disaster—disaster for me and my college—before I was to meet Wyman. I spent those two hours thinking sad thoughts, and when I found Wyman in the Harvard Club his face was almost as gloomy as my own.

"Well, what are we going to do with Lucile?" he inquired.

"What have you done with her? Hotel or hospital?"

"Oh, I sent her to the Hotel Susan B. Anthony, for women only. I didn't want to take a chance on any more mixups. But that doesn't settle anything. As I said before, what are we going to do with her?"

"She wants to be economically independent," I reminded him. "I suppose that means go to work. Has she suggested anything definite?"

"Oh, yes. She's suggested ten or fifteen things definite. Just at present she wants to sell perfumes and cosmetics, unless she's changed her mind since half-past nine and

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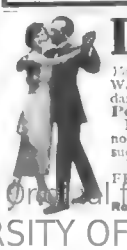

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would rather design costumes for pageants, or be a hotel hostess, or write plays."

"She'll have some money before long. She's selling her jewels."

"So she told me. But that will be gone in two or three months."

"Oh, surely——"

"Yes, surely. I suppose you knew her only when she was in college and didn't have much money. She's an extravagant little thing, Alec. And because she's never tried to make her own living, she doesn't realize that without special training it's none too easy. Why, look at us, Alec; look at us. We are gentlemen, university graduates, polished representatives of the intellectual aristocracy. I'm an experienced editor, but the best job I ever had paid a hundred a week. You're a brilliant young scholar, a recognized authority on something or other. In your business you'll never make more than a hundred a week, yet Lucile, who would look on a hundred a week as downright poverty, thinks she can make a comfortable living by doing something ladylike. The only thing she can do well is to wheedle money out of impressionable men like you and her husband. I must say, Alec, it looks pretty blue."

"BUT you've overlooked something," I pointed out. "I think this idea of living her own life is mostly talk. She's honest about it, of course; but you know as well as I do that Lucile will always need a broad and hospitable shoulder on which to lay the weary head. This idea of economic independence was only a stopgap. You see, you'd gone out of her life. Now that she's found you again I'm sure she'll marry you."

"Marry me?"

"Why, aren't you going to marry her? She told me—you told me yourself——"

"Of course I'd like to marry her. But you can't steal a man's wife when you owe him money. It isn't done."

"Then you'll have to pay him."

"Pay him!" said Wyman. "My God! Ten thousand dollars! I couldn't put aside that much money in ninety years. Besides, how is she going to divorce him? In New York there's only one ground. She'd have to sue in Illinois. And the law there requires two years desertion before you can get a decree, even if we could make it appear that he deserted her."

"Surely you could find some other grounds——"

"Pemberton's hell to live with, but he's a model husband. Never looks at a woman, drinks next to nothing, never beats his wife——"

"But she hates him. She found him unendurable. Surely there must have been some piece of cruelty— I remember she spoke of his laying hands on her——"

"Yes, she told me about that. He shook her. Can't say that I blame him much; I've shaken her myself. Haven't you?"

"No, though I've often wanted to. However, I'm not her husband. You and I could shake her and it would be nothing but a playful little fuss; but if her husband shakes her—extreme cruelty."

"It wouldn't get by," he prophesied. "The only way we could free her—soon, at any rate—would be to let Pemberton take action."

"Pemberton! Against Lucile?"

"Oh, I don't want to be understood as advocating it," said Wyman. "I'm merely pointing out the only way she can be freed from him without a lot of delay."

"But what could he sue her on?"

"Well, he might get wind of the fact that she stayed two or three days in your apartment. That would be good enough for most courts."

"But—but— No, I'm damned if it would. Billy Bonner will swear that I stayed with him."

"Of course, of course," said Wyman. "And anyway, we don't want anything like that. Not for Lucile."

"We've got to keep her name clear, whatever happens," I agreed.

"So that means that she and I—we talked this all over at dinner. You might as well know it now, since you've been so much help to us both. The fact is, we've decided that we'd have to give it up—to be only friends. We couldn't manage the other. Too many obstacles in the way. We hated to give it up, because we saw it would be a blow to you——"

"To me?"

"Why, yes. You felt so good over having brought us together again that it was very hard for us to make up our minds we'd have to spoil your pleasure. But we couldn't risk the ruin of our futures just to save your feelings— It was an idyllic affair, Alec; the most inspiring thing that ever happened to me; it's going to leave a deep impression on my life. I feel that I shall write much more vividly hereafter. But it was so idyllic that we felt it would be best to let it remain only a memory; the sordid realities of every-day life together would only have dulled the recollection of those golden hours. So we must part."

"But you and I are going to have to stand by Lucile," I reminded him. "She needs encouragement; she may need money——"

"MY SHOULDER is hospitable," he said moodily, "but I'm afraid it isn't very comfortable. What with the high cost of living it is becoming bony and emaciated. I'll do what I can, of course; but I'm out of a job, and they tell me this is going to be a hard summer for free lances."

"And you're going to let this affair go to pieces," I cried, "when it's cost you both so much already? Wyman, you're a fool. If you and Lucile only had the courage, you could put it over—you would put it over—scandal or no scandal, money or no money. If you were big enough——"

"Don't say that," he begged. "It hurts. You see, if it were only myself— It's the biggest thing that ever happened to me; even with all the odds against us, I sometimes feel strong enough to carry it through. But Lucile— You know how volatile she is. Lovely little creature, but—well, I can't be sure of her. I don't believe she's enough in earnest. She thinks she is, but she's changeable. She couldn't see it through. We'll have to go our own ways."

He put on his hat and went his own way; out into the night, out into this big, cold world; out into Forty-fourth Street. So this was the end of it all.

And then I realized that it was a long way from the end. Lucile was still in New York; wanted to realize her personality—live her own life; if Wyman couldn't look after her, somebody else would have to.

I seemed to be holding the sack.

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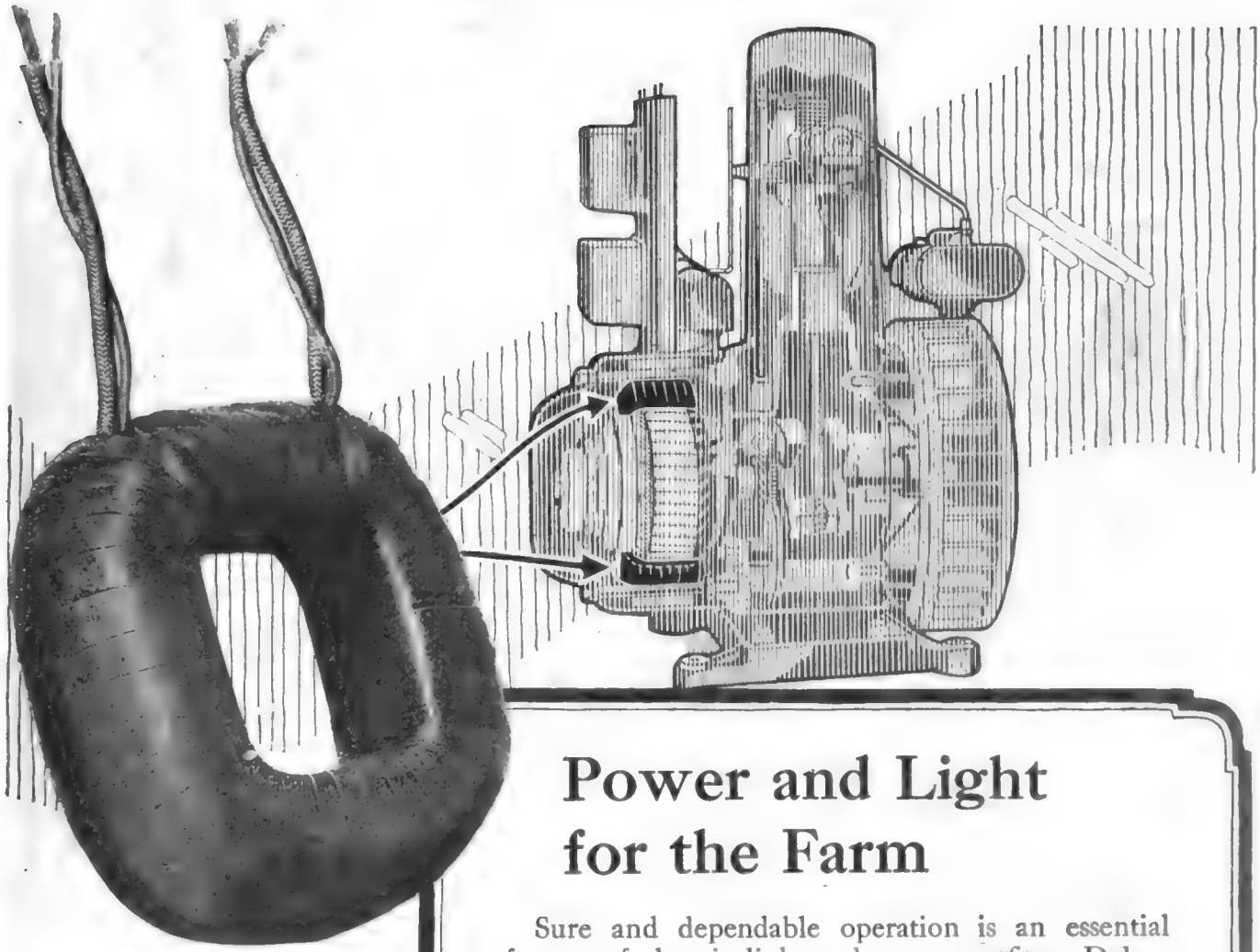

Power and Light for the Farm

Sure and dependable operation is an essential feature of electric light and power outfits. Delco-Light dependability is well known, particularly on the hundred thousand farms that already derive electricity from Delco-Light units.

Every part must live up to the high standard set by Delco-Light for the whole machine. The field coils, for instance, are Acme Wire Coils—standard in their branch of the electrical industry.

In all sorts of electrical appliances, from magnetos to vacuum cleaners, and from doorbells to self-starters, Acme Magnet Wire and Acme Wire Coils are doing their part to give you reliable service.

Acme Wire—It goes in the space

Our new catalog shows details of Acme Wire Products.
Sent free on request.

THE ACME WIRE CO.
New Haven, Conn.

Acme Wire Products

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With

EVERYBODY'S PUBLISHERS

THE economists tell us, "Not quite so big a bulge to the Christmas stocking this year;" and the philosophers add, "But the stocking itself will not cost quite so much."

The plain truth seems to be that, as a nation, we are going to have an opportunity for character disclosure.

How many times have you heard it said of some one, "He couldn't stand prosperity," meaning, of course, that an inflow of the good things of life went to the head of the recipient like strong wine; that he lost his grip on himself, became top-lofty or reckless in expenditure generally, giving free rein to desires or appetites previously held in check by principles or by poverty.

As a people, it will have to be admitted that we haven't stood prosperity any too well. Excesses have been in evidence—we do not mean wholly in the outburst of personal extravagance as exemplified in silk-shirt buying, and the purchase of automobiles through mortgages or partial payments, and so on.

We mean in more fundamental things—the imposition of unfair charges for goods, and equally, of exorbitant pay for services.

This constituted profiteering in one case as in the other, and both formed perfect examples of our failure to "stand prosperity."

Are we going to "stand" adversity better? We say adversity, but the word is too strong, doubtless, for the general readjustment now under way, however inadequate it may seem to those who monopolized much of the prosperity.

Anyway, how are we going to behave in the presence of less prosperous times?

Already we have examples of the extremes of conduct we may expect.

Up in Lowell, Massachusetts, a plant employing 3500 folks had to close because of lack of orders. The employees met, debated, and informed the management that they would be satisfied to take a cut of 15% in wages, provided the plant would reopen.

It detracts not at all from the spirit of that offer that it could not be accepted.

At some price, the goods that plant makes will find a market, and the big fact is that the workers in it are willing, apparently, to do their "bit" in getting the product down to that price.

Away at the opposite end of the scale is the criminal conduct of the so-called "Night Riders" in the South, burning cotton gins and threatening the owners of other gins that unless they remain closed and thus hold cotton from the market and maintain its high price, their property, too, will be destroyed.

It is not improbable that the very cotton thus kept from the market would have formed a part of the raw material for the Lowell mills.

These are the extremes of conduct in the face of ebbing business.

Which is to find the most favor with the most of us?

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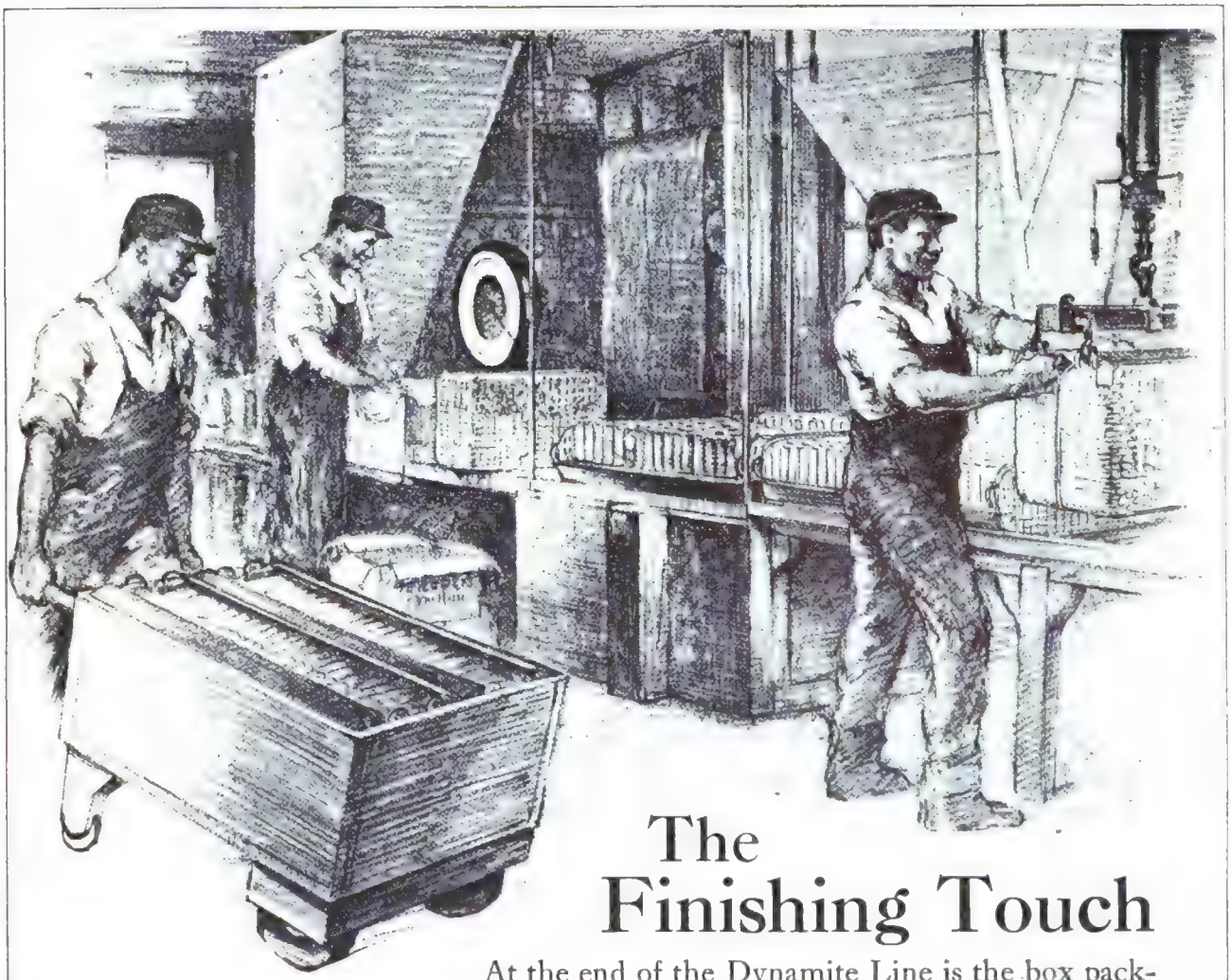

The Finishing Touch

At the end of the Dynamite Line is the box packing house. Here Hercules Dynamite receives its finishing touch.

In this house three operations take place. The cartridges are dipped in melted paraffine and made thoroughly moisture proof. They are given a final inspection. They are weighed and packed, and every effort is made to see that each box contains not an ounce less than its 25 or 50 pounds of dynamite.

The hands of the men who do this work are the last to touch, their eyes the last to see Hercules Dynamite before it reaches the scenes of its appointed tasks. Their care, their thoroughness, supplies the final check necessary for the successful use of over fifty million pounds of Hercules Dynamite a year.

* * *

A farmer in Minnesota is clearing a field of stumps. A miner in Pennsylvania is bringing down a breast of coal. Engineers are driving a great tunnel through the heart of the Rockies. In a great city the foundation of a skyscraper is being carved out of solid rock.

Hercules Dynamite is on the job in every case—dynamite which a few short weeks ago passed under the hands and eyes of men at the end of a Hercules Dynamite Line—dynamite which has made the name Hercules a synonym for dependability in explosives.

HERCULES POWDERS

HERCULES POWDER CO.

Chicago	St. Louis	New York
Pittsburg, Kan.	Denver	Hazleton, Pa.
San Francisco	Salt Lake City	Joplin
Chattanooga	Pittsburgh, Pa.	Wilmington, Del.

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Your Suggestion Window

Filled with beautiful *Silver*-universally treasured because it so fittingly suggests the useful, enduring loveliness of that happy spirit which makes Christmas the most "looked-forward-to" day of the year. Visit that *Silver* window. It will help you to solve the ever-perplexing problem of- "What shall my gift selections be?" There you will find the Tea Service mother has so long admired- a Vanity Case, perhaps, for sister Julia- a Smoking Set for brother Tom. And for good old dad- something especially choice which will bring into his eyes the glisten of that wonder look we all so love to see. Yes, why not make this your *Silver* Christmas?

GORHAM STERLING SILVERWARE

© 1920 is sold by leading jewelers everywhere

THE GORHAM COMPANY Silversmiths & Goldsmiths NEW YORK
WORKS PROVIDENCE AND NEW YORK

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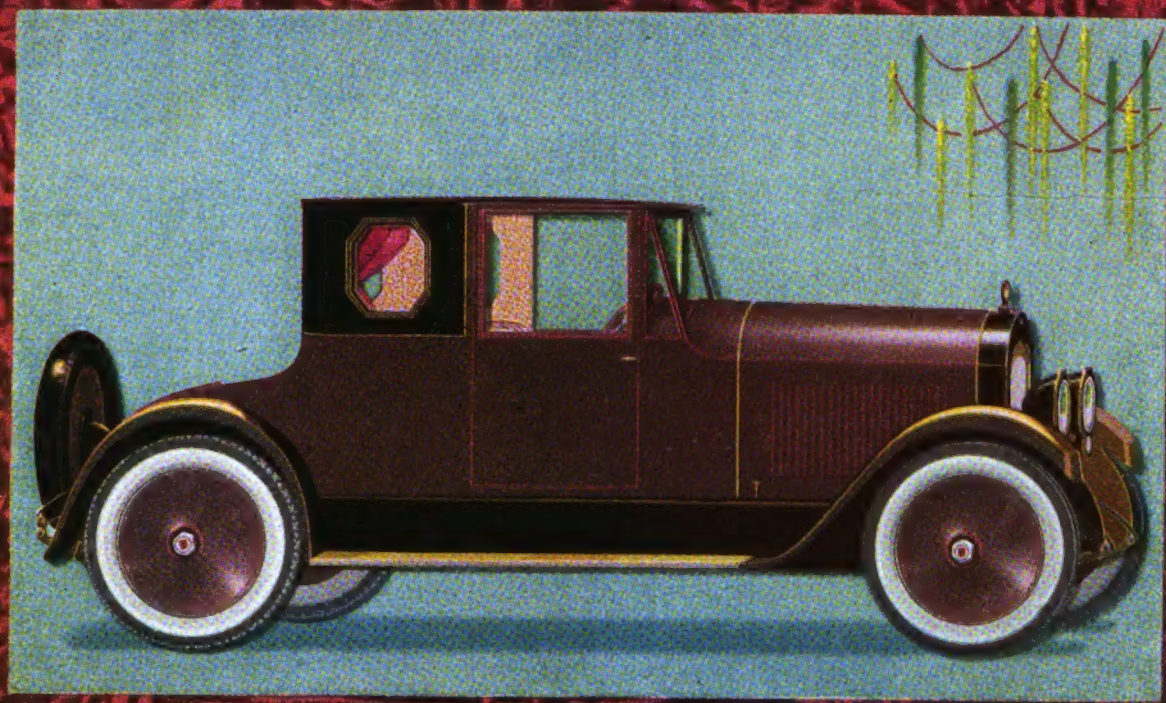
THERE'S A TOUCH OF TOMORROW IN ALL COLE DOES TODAY



T.B.M.

Sportcoupé

Cole Aero-Eight

THE FASHION-PLATE AMONG MOTOR CARS
A MODEL OF MECHANICAL EFFICIENCY

COLE MOTOR CAR COMPANY, INDIANAPOLIS, U.S.A.

Creators of Advanced Motor Cars

Patent applied for

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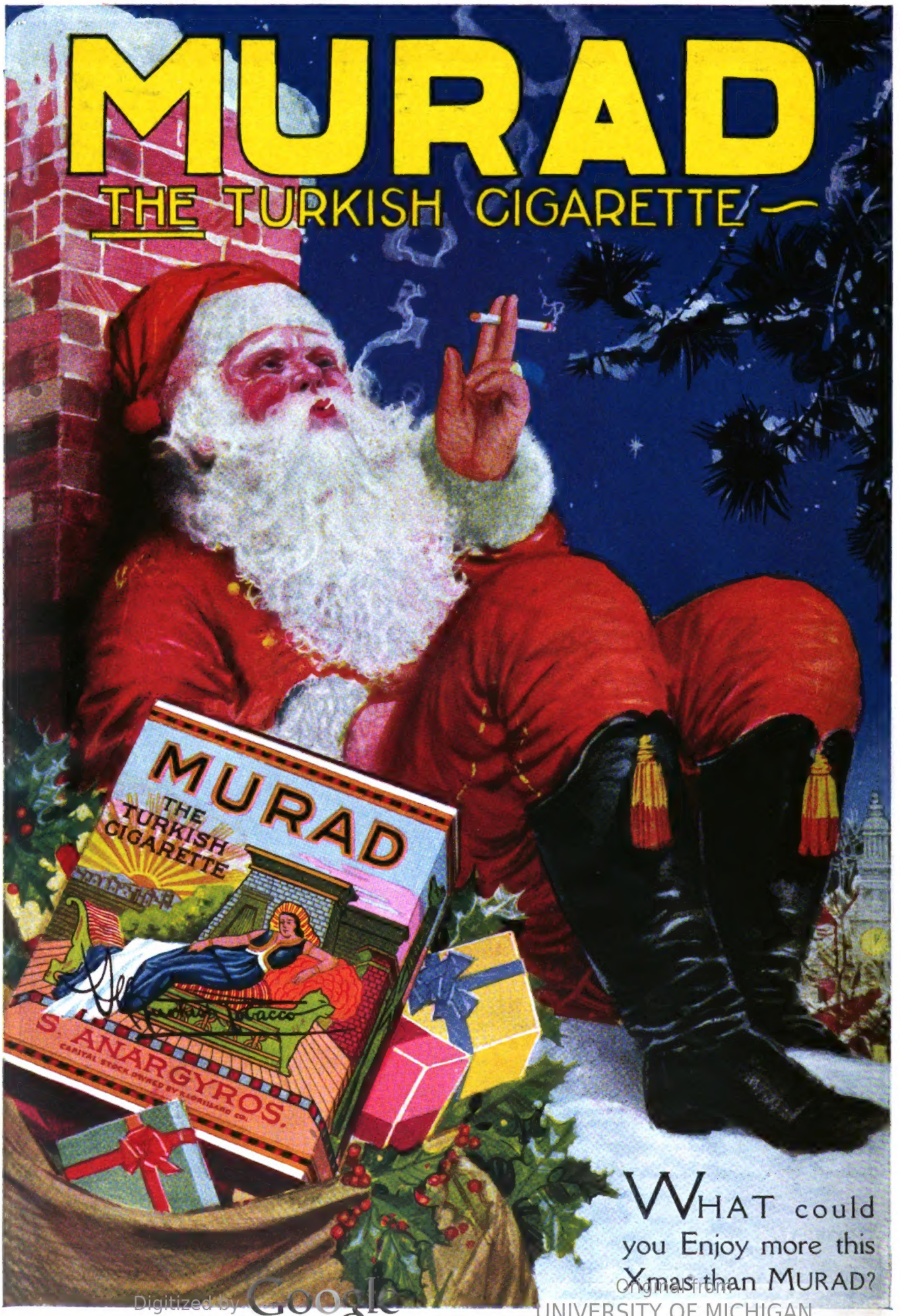

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Columbia Grafonola

Give Music This Christmas

Give your family a Columbia Grafonola with Columbia Records for Christmas. Then right at your fireside you will find such famous *exclusive* Columbia popular artists as Al Jolson, Bert Williams, Frank Crumit, Harry Fox, Marion Harris, Nora Bayes, Ted Lewis' Jazz Band, and Van and Schenck; such *exclusive* Columbia opera stars as Barrientos, Gordon, Hackett, Ponselle, and Stracciari and a world of other artists besides. Call on any Columbia dealer and he will let you play their latest records.

COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE CO.
New York
Canadian Factory: Toronto

The Only Non Set Automatic Stop

Nothing to move or set or measure. Just start the Grafonola and it plays and stops itself. Never stops before it should. Always stops at the very end. Exclusively on the Columbia Grafonola.

Standard Models up to $300—Period Designs up to $2100

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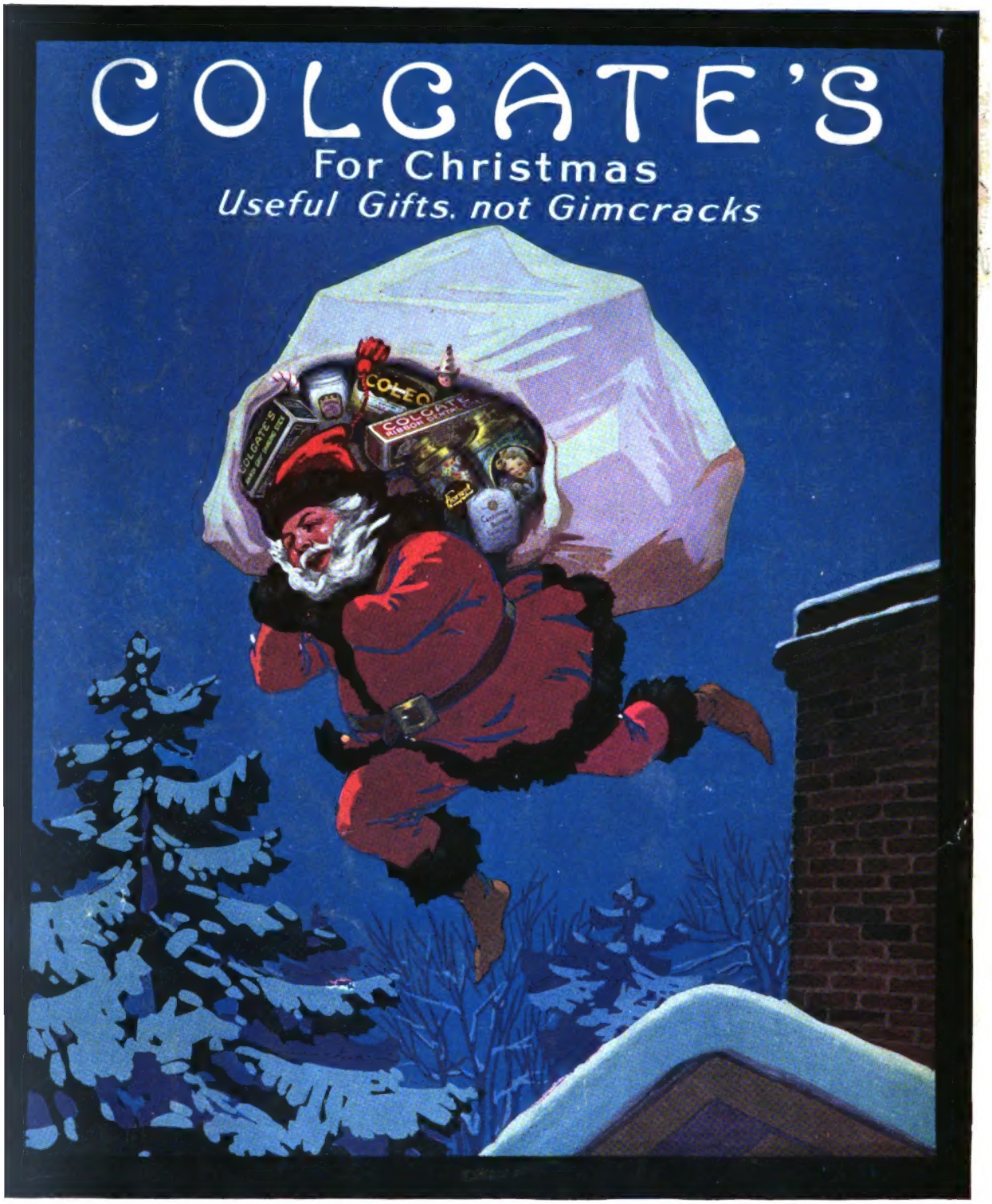
COLGATE'S

For Christmas

Useful Gifts, not Gimcracks



SHOPPING LIST

For a Man
Colgate's "Handy Grip" Shaving Stick
Ribbon Dental Cream
Lilac Imperial Toilet Water

For a Woman
Florient Talc Florient Perfume
Florient Face Powder

For a Boy
Ribbon Dental Cream
Colgate's Mechanics' Soap Paste

For a Girl
Cashmere Bouquet Perfume
Cashmere Bouquet Soap
Charmis Cold Cream
Mirage (Vanishing) Cream

For Baby
Coleo Soap Baby Talc

For the little Gifts—give Colgate's

THE problem of the little gifts at Christmas time and even some of the greater ones —can be satisfactorily decided among the many Colgate articles.

Colgate Gifts are appropriate for young or old, for man or woman, for boy or girl—not forgetting the baby. They have daintiness and acknowledged superiority. Also they show that you have taken thought for the receiver's comfort and have given something that can be *used*.

Make this a Colgate Christmas. You would be glad to receive Colgate Comforts yourself—and so will your friends. At your favorite store ask to see the "Colgate Assortment of Gifts."

To tuck in the Christmas stockings—the big red tubes of Colgate's Ribbon Dental Cream. The Colgate Mother Goose Books will slip in well, too. They come in a set of 12, with colored covers by Jessie Willcox Smith, the famous artist of child life. Send 20c for the set, addressing Dept. E, 199 Fulton Street, New York.

COLGATE & CO. *Established 1806* NEW YORK

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